







THE RETURNS  
OF  
Spiritual *comfort* and *grief*  
IN  
A DEVOUT SOUL.

Represented (by intercourse of *Letters*) to the Right Honorable,  
the Ladie *L E T I C E*,  
Vi-Countess *Falkland*, in  
her life time.

A N D  
Exemplified in the holie *Life* and  
*Death* of the said Honorable Ladie.

*Published for the benefit and ease of all who  
labour under Spiritual Affliction.*

---

By JOHN DUNCAN, Parson (Seque-  
stred) of *Rattenden* in *Essex*.

---

2 Cor. 1. 12.

*We are helpers of your joy.*

---

The second Edition, enlarged.

---

L O N D O N,

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T O  
The pious Reader.

Christian Reader,

**I***t hath fared with me  
(by the extraordinary  
blessing of God) as some-  
times it doth with Ship-  
wrecked Mariners, to  
be cast off a tempestuous  
Sea, into a rich Island.*

*Had I gone onward in  
the voyage I set out for,*  
A 3 (at-

To the Reader.

(attending my Cure in Essex) I could not have promised my self so much content, and satisfaction, (no, not in Outward respects) as my happy Shipwrack (by Sequestration from my Parsonage) hath gained me. I left Houses and Friends, but God provided (according to his promise, S. Mark 10.13.) even these wordly Comforts, with an hundred-fold Advantage.

I shall offer no other  
proof

To the Reader.

proof for it then that I  
was received with full  
Accommodations, and plen-  
tifull Conveniencies in the  
House of the Right Ho-  
nourable Vi-Countess Falk-  
land.

And in this Family,  
while I was reaping Car-  
nall Things, there appea-  
red to me, a necessity of  
sowing Spiritual Things.

This virtuous Lady  
afflicted with Barrenness  
in Her Soul, wanted For-  
ward Comforts; and I,  
A4 being

To the Reader.

*being the nearest ( though  
the meanest ) of Gods  
Ministers , undertooke  
that Office of Comfor-  
ting.*

*And after frequent  
Communication with this  
Lady, having learned  
all Her Objections against  
Her selfe , and having  
seene the chief sorrowes  
of Her heart , I compo-  
sed them into these Letters,  
and annexed these Answers  
to them, and left them with  
Her.*

*And*

To the Reader.

And now they are the  
Figure of a Pious Soul,  
with its vicissitudes of  
Comfort, and Grief; The  
Lineaments of which  
Figure I have drawne  
(as you will understand  
by comparing the Treatise,  
with the Life hereunto  
annexed) from that Holy  
Ladies Soul; lest she  
(for whom alone it  
was at first decyphered)  
should think it too generall;  
But the Proportions, and  
Degrees, I drew not  
A 5 exactly

To the Reader.

exactly from Her ; those  
I heighten here and there,  
lest you ( for whose benefit  
it is now Published )  
should think it too parti-  
cular.

So it will appear that  
these Letters, and their  
Answers, are not a strict  
Relation, but a Repre-  
sentation : And in them  
I have taken the Li-  
berty of a Representor, to  
expresse the height of  
Comfort, and the depth of  
Sorrow, suddenly succee-  
ding



To the Reader.

ding one the other; One  
and the same Soul ye-  
sterday on the top of  
Mount Tabor, shining  
with the excesse of Com-  
fort, and to Day on the  
top of Mount Calvary,  
pierced through with the  
sharpest points of Sorrow;  
And though this be not  
ordinary, yet some such  
there have beene and  
are.

But you perhaps, are  
one of those Holy Soules,  
who walk in the plaine  
low

To the Reader.

low way , unacquainted  
with Heights and Depths ;  
And, though so , in this  
Representation you may  
see the various Dispen-  
sations of God, and from  
it you may learn (how-  
ever God hath beene  
pleased to deal with you  
heretofore ; or however  
he shall be pleased to  
deal with you here-  
after ) to be fervent in  
Spirit, and to be zealous to  
the end.

The other annexed  
Letter

To the Reader.

*Letter is not a Representation of what the Lady should have been, or how she ought to have lived, and dyed, but a strict Relation, of some Spirituall Comforts and Griefs, with their Returns; and of many excellent virtues in the life of the late Vi-Countesse Falkland; which particulars were gathered up and put together, at the request of some of Her dear Friends, who have promised (as it is*

To the Reader.

*is hoped you also will ) to be  
followers of Her, as she was  
of Christ, and then to strive  
to excel in every grace and  
virtue.*

*If by any thing you re-  
ceive Comfort, or Benefit,  
let God have the praise,  
and pray for me, who am*

Your friend and servant

in our Lord Christ,

I. D.



To the Memorie of the most religi-  
ous and virtuous Ladie, the Ladie  
*Letice, Vi-Countesse Falkland.*

*Her Comparifon With ancient Saints.*

S Hew me your *Legends*, you in whose bright year  
More *Saints & Martyrs* then *black Daies* appears:  
Martyrs and Saints, whose consecrated Names  
Stand shining there, as in their second Flames  
Mong'ft all your *Tecla's*, *Bridget's*, *Friswid's*; All  
Your fiction-Saints; Or which we true Saints call;  
You will not find one He, or She more fit  
To be extoll'd, or canoniz'd in Wit,  
Then *this departed Ladie*, who embalms  
All Poetrie, and turns all Verse to Psalms.

Come then my holiest Fires, lend me a Heat  
As pure as that which did in *David* bear,  
When to's inspired Harp, and sacred String,  
He did the Deeds of ancient Hero's sing.  
In whose high Numbers, and religious strain,  
*Moses* yet lives, and *Miriam* breathes again.  
And who, (*A Poet after Gods own heart*,  
*As wel as Man*) such Virtue did impart  
To his own storie, that he thence is stil  
A Scripture-Saint, made so by his own quill.  
Had He this Ladie, or her Actions seen;  
She had a part of his rare Psalter been.  
And had stood there recorded by his pen,  
The holiest Woman next to holie men.

*Her*

### *Her Childhood.*

WHose Infancie (The time when He begins:  
To tempt us with the first Assault of Sins,  
Who in a borrow'd shape doth stil invade  
Our Age, like *Eve*, as soone as we are made)  
Was so quick-sighted, so wel taught, that she  
Through his false paint did then the Serpent see;  
Then in her Cradle strangled him; whose suits  
Came drest i'th' Beauty of forbidden Fruits.

### *Her Youth.*

HER Youth was like her Infancie, from whence  
Began her second State of Innocence.  
An Age as harmless as if stil new born;  
A Time of Daie as spotless as her Morn;  
A Stage of Life, in which appear'd all seeds  
Of after Virtue, yet unmix'd with weeds.  
Here did begin her Studies, which then told  
How young she was in years, in Grace how old.  
Whose other Scriptures were Gods creatures, where  
She heard him spake t' her Eie, as that t' her Ear.  
And, like the *Hebrew Shepherd*; in each blush  
Of Flowers, beheld him flaming in a Bush (sound,  
Once more unburnt, thence thought she heard a  
Which told her, God thus seen, made holie ground.  
She did not spend her Daies, like some who do  
With their youths dressings learn youths vices too.  
Nor was she school'd in th' art to weave her Hair  
Into loose Braids, and make it thence grow Snare.  
Or how to frame her smiles, or order looks;  
Or make her gestures passe for wel-laid hooks;  
Such false court engines she bequeath'd to those,  
Whose virtue is their face, and good parts clothes.

### *Her Marriage.*

HER riper years did call her to the bed,  
Of one who did Her, not her dowrie, wed.

No

No shaft with gold tipt, no dart shot from eies ;  
 No fires were here seen which from fancie rise.  
 Between these curtains, and this nuptial sheet,  
 Male vertue did with female virtue meet.  
 A soul with soul, & mind herematch'd with mind,  
 The marriage torch held by a God not blind.  
 A Husband he, and she a Wife, whose wil  
 After four child-births was a Virgin stil.

### *Her Husbands Death.*

**H**ere, *Noble Lord*, could I bestow on Thee  
 Such learned Verse as thou did'st once on me,  
 I on thy Herse should stick poetick Baies,  
 And raise thee Statues, made and built of praise.  
 Who wert thy *Nations glorie, Englands pen ;*  
 The best of writing, and of fighting men.  
 In whom the Camp, and Mules claim'd a part ;  
 A Scholars head, join'd to a Souldiers heart.  
 By whose sword somtimes, but by thy rare quill,  
 We alwaies conquer'd, and here vanquish't stil.  
 But since thou left'st us, to write wel hath bin  
 By our new times held a republick sin.  
 All wit, like thine, now undergoes thy fate ;  
 First call'd *Malignant*, and a *Fo to th' State ;*  
 Then murther'd by the dul, mechanick, rude,  
 Half beast, half man, *Fox-Tinker* multitude.  
 Say, O ye *Coblers, Weavers, Tinkers*, you  
 Whose second trade is War, and Preaching ; who  
 New prentices oth' field (O servile rout !)  
 Have there against your Prince your time serv'd  
 What expiation, what requital can (our ;  
 A legion of you make for this one man,  
 Were a whole legion slain, or felt the doom.  
 Of her who perisht on *Achilles* tomb ?  
 You boast of teaching Lords, and Ladies, who,  
 (Wives to those Lords) use to expound, like you ;  
 When

When you have prais'd them with your holiest  
And join'd your pains to their hypocries ; (lies,  
Amongst them all you will not find one life  
Like to this Lords ; or 'mongst them all a wife  
Like to this Ladie ; whose true zeal, and heart  
T'wards God was more then they can counterfeit.

*Her Widowhood.*

Who now a Widow, and her dear Lord slain,  
Liv'd *St. Paul's Matron* ; that's a maid again.  
A *Scripture Vestal*, one whose chaste desire  
Call'd it adultery not to watch one fire.  
A *Gospel Lucerna* to all second loves,  
One made of ice t'ward *Venus*, and her doves.  
In whom all loose thoughts did so coldly grow,  
That they, who courted her, made love to snow.

*Her devotion and zeal.*

Yet in this coldness, and obdurate frost,  
Still burn'd a holie fire conceal'd, not lost.  
A fire, whose pure flames still flew up, like those  
Which in wing'd Pyramids from Altars rose ;  
A fire, which in most others kindles vice ;  
But here made morn, and evening sacrifice.

O had you heard her fervent prayers, (the key  
With which she open'd and lock't up the daie)  
Had you ere in her week-daie Temple been,  
Her consecrated closet ; and there seen  
This Ladie on her knees, whilst with her eies  
She climb'd the stars, and did invade the skies ;  
Had you there mark'd what clouds of sighs, what  
Of tears she rain'd at penitential howrs ; (shows  
How humble in her looks, and yet how stout.  
How earnest, wrestling, and yet still devout,  
You'd write of her like me, and say that hence  
Heaven did once more suffer violence.

*Her*



### *Her tenderneſs of Conſcience.*

Come now ye twilight ſaints, religious bats,  
Who ſwallow camels, and yet ſtrain at gnats ;  
You, whoſe wild ſcruples, heighten into rage,  
Are now the zeal, and madneſs of our age,  
Shew me one Ladie like to this ; who ſtil  
Was ſo preciſe, ſo fearful to do ill, <sup>ſplac'd</sup>  
That her indifferent thoughts, words, dreams were  
'Mongſt things to be repented ; nay, at laſt,  
She queſtion'd her good Deeds, and did begin  
To call imperfect virtue venial ſin.

### *Her Charitie.*

YEt look upon her *Alms*, or ask the poor,  
(Who ſtil put off their hunger at her door,  
Together with their rags) how often they,  
Who came there naked, went wel-cloath'd away ;  
Ask them how oft the hedg, and high-way gueſt,  
Transform'd her table to the Scripture feaſt,  
Where the invited were all lame, or blind,  
Beggars half-famiſh'd, who til then ne'r din'd ;  
They'l ſay, ſhe did *Chriſt* in his members ſee,  
And all that wanted her relief, were He. ;

Nor did ſhe, like our *Phariſees*, diſpenſe  
Her gifts before men, to win praiſe from thence.  
Her charitie was ſecret, no alms known,  
The poor relev'd, without a trumpet blown.  
No corner of a ſtreet, no bountie cleft,  
Her right hand ſtil was ſtranger to the left.  
Her doles, indeed, were Scripture wonders, we  
Once more ſaw Loaves, and Fiſhes multiplie  
Between the givers hands; from whence they grew  
Full baskets, and fed thouſands; how, none know

Her

*Her Death.*

**A**nd now, though I cannot report her death  
In words as holie as her dying breath,  
With which expir'd her soul, as free from sin  
And spotless almost, as when't first came in  
To her frail bodie; yet as oft as I  
Do read of Saints advanc'd above the skie,  
Sitting on amber clouds, and cloath'd in white,  
Methinks a glittering Angel bids me write,  
My revelation too, *where Thrones appear,*  
*And she in those white Robes she put on here.*

I: M: ex Æ: C: Ox.

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A



## A brief of the severals in this T R E A T I S E.

### The first Letter.

**U**Pon the Soules constancie and frequencie in holie Duties, her comforts in them are presented.

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### The Answer.

Sheweth the speciall favor of God, affording at the first begining of a devout life, both sensible and spiritual Consolations.

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17

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20

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28

The

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35

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39

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41

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66

*The*

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A Letter, containing manie remarkable passages in the most holie Life and Death of the Ladie Lettice Vi-Countess Falkland.

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### D Greg. Moral. l. 24. c. 28.

*Vitam uniuscuiusq; conversi, & Inchoatio blanda permulcet, & aspera medietas probat, & plena post perfectio roborat.*

### D. Greg. Moral. l. 14. c. 28.

*Quisque in ipso Conversionis initio, magna plerumq; excipitur dulcedine consolationis : sed durum laborem postmodum experitur probationis. Tres quippe modi sunt Conversorum, Inchoatio, Medietas, atque Perfectio. In Inchoatione inveniunt Blandimenta Dulcedinis ; in medio quoque tempore Certamina Temationis ; ad extremum verò Perfectionem Pleuitudinis. Prius ergo Illos Dulcia suscipiunt, quæ consolentur ; postmodum amara, quæ exerceant ; & tunc demùm suavia, & sublimia, quæ confirmant.*



# The Returns of Spiritual Comfort and Grief, in a DEVOUT SOUL.

Represented to the late Ladie Vi-  
Countesse *Falkland*, in her life time,  
by entercourse of Letters.

---

## *The First Letter.*

*Upon the Soules constancie and frequencie in  
holy Duties, her comforts in them are re-  
presented.*

Sir,



Should be not onely un-  
thankful, but uncivil, if  
I give you not account of  
my state and condition,  
since our last abode to-  
gether.

With humble thanks to God, for his  
grace and goodnes, towards me, premised,  
thus it is. Your Spiritual directions I

B

have

## 2 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

have observed, as punctually as I could : I am present at all *publike Assemblies*, in the house of God, and bear my part constantly in that solemn worship of his Name. And to these *publike devotions*, I adde *private Prayers* with my family, *Morning and Evening*, and to them, *Secret*, in my *Closet*, and these duties I perform constantly ; for I remember you told me, that that strict precept of the Apostle, *Pray continually*, hath not ordinarily a more qualified sense then this, *Observe your set-times of Prayer, constantly, without intermission.*

Neither am I lesse constant at *Sermons*, and *Catechisings*, and at the *Holy Sacrament* of our most *Blessed Lords Body and Blood*, though I cannot be so frequent at these duties ; Those I can hear but once a week, this I can receive, but once a moneth. And on daies of *Humiliation*, I labour to intermix more earnest, as well as more frequent *Prayers*, for the *publik necessities*, and for mine own private wants ; endeavouring to observe the *Ordinary*, and *extraordinary Fasts* of the *Church*, as strictly as my weak body, and my weaker flesh wil give me leave.

And that which I relate all this for,  
which



which I dare not divulge to others, nor concale from you, is this : my exceeding great *delight* in these *spiritual exercises* ; while I hear, or read, I taste much *sweetnesse* in the promises of the Gospel ; and while I *pray* or *meditate*, I receive much *Comfort* and *delight* ; my soul is filled as it were with *marrow* and *fatnesse*, and my heart is almost ravished with *spiritual joy*.

Now and then I compare the former *pleasures* and *delights*, I had in worldly things, at Court, with *these* I now enjoy, and I account *them* all as drosse and dung in comparison of *these* ; And if it were Capital in the Judicial Law, for any one to have a perfume in his house, like to that of the Tabernacle, *Exod. 30. ult.* surely he is not guiltles, who fancies any true *sweetnesse*, or *delight*, any where, but in the *Tabernacle* : no perfume can be made, nor ought to be thought, so sweet, so fragrant, so excellent, as this ; no *delights*, or *comforts* in our own houses, or in Kings Courts either, comparable to these of the *Tabernacle*, and *Temple* of God.

Now I misse those opportunities I had at Court and at the Cathedral Church ;

#### 4 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

either of those places afforded publick *Prayers thrice every day*, and *Lectures* also on the *week days*; Nay, it is not here so well with me, as it was, when you and I lived together in that Country Village, where the good *Parson* had *Morning and Evening Prayer* in the Parish Church, twice a day continually; where I now live we have this advantage of *Publick Prayer*, only on the *Lords Day*, and its *Eve*, and on *Holy-days*, and their *Eve's*, and on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, our wonted *Letany-days*; now I find not that other *Analogie* between our *Prayers*, and the *Incense* and *perfumes* of the *Tabernacle*, that as *those* were, so *these* are now offered up daily: However the *sweetness* of them is it I speak of, which I have most plentifully from them.

And now upon the *sense* and *feeling* of these *joys* and *comforts* in the service of God, I am confirmed in hope, that neither *Life*, nor *Death*, nor *Angels*, nor *Principalities*, nor *Powers*, nor *things present*, nor *things to come*, shall be able to separate me from the *Love of God*, and of his *service* and *worship*; but as I have begun, so I shall (by Gods grace) persevere in it, to my lives end; for which I pray  
daily

daily, and do also desire your prayers, for him, who is,

*Yours in the Lord.*

---

*The Answer.*

*Sheweth the special favour of God, affording at the first beginning of a Devout life, both sensible and spiritual Consolations.*

Sir,

**Y**Ours I received, and rejoyce with you, for the *Comforts* and *joys* you find in the *service* of God, and for your diligence in holy duties, and exercises of Devotion: you now *taste*, and *see* the goodnesse of the Lord, that in *keeping* of his *Commandements*, there is exceeding delight and joy; *Psal.* 19. not onely comfort laid up for it hereafter, but also comfort in it here; such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; nor hath it entred into the heart of man, to conceive what God hath prepared, even in this world, (for of such the Apostle speaks in that place) for such as love him; *1 Cor.* 2. 9. so that *vertue* and *piety* is an excellent great reward to it self: And yet that

B 3

which

## 6 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

which is before us, hereafter, is infinitely beyond this ; for if there be such *pleasures* in the Kingdome of *Grace*, how unspeakably transcendent are those laid up for us, in the kingdome of *Glory* !

Notwithstanding there is somewhat *special* in the *goodnesse*, and *wisdom* of God, affording such *comforts* and *delights* unto you at this your first setting forth in this spiritual race. And it is this.

That you may perceive, and that presently, what *advantage* you have gained by the change of your life; and that thereupon you may strengthen your resolution more and more, of continuing in this pious course, of running to the end of the race, that you may obtain that *prize* of endlesse joy and comfort : For you confesse your selfe a great gainer already, having in possession *Gold* instead of *Brasse*, *Silver* for *Lead*, *Spiritual* delights and pleasures for *worldly* and *Carnal* ; Instead of *hucks* (fit onely for swine) in a *strange* Country, you have *goodly provision* (a *fatted Calf*) and this attended with *mirth* and *musick*, in your *fathers house*.

Oh let not an ey roule, nor a thought stray back again towards that strange country of Egypt, toward the onions, and flesh-

flesh-pots there ; now you are so fully satisfied, and delighted, with this Manna from heaven ! And if at any time you should not taste the true sweetnesse of this, yet let not the false pleasures of the other, be once thought on, by you ; This I intreat, not without some vehemency, and earnestnesse : For I must tell you, that

All such comfort and delight (as you seeme to speak of) is not spiritual, nor lasting ; In these holy exercises (of fasting, praying, meditating, hearing Sermons, and receiving the blessed Sacrament, and such like) there is an outward and sensible comfort, as well as an inward, and spiritual comfort ; and those sensible consolations (as they are called) not so lasting, and permanent, as these inward comforts are : consider this, I pray, and examine whether your comforts be inward and spiritual, or outward and sensible comforts onely, or whether you abound with both : In the mean while I shall remember you with Davids Praier (for a people exalted with joy and comfort in Gods service) that the Lord God would keep this joy for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of your heart, 1 Chr. 29. 18. and stablish your heart thereby, unto himselfe.

## 8 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

Thus desiring your prayers for me, I commend you to Gods protection, and rest

*Your servants in our Lord and  
Master Christ Jesus.*

---

### *The Second Letter.*

*The increase of Consolations in a pious Soul.*

Sir,

**T**He Lord heareth your praier for me, and answereth them graciously ; for my *delights* and *joyes* in the performance of all *holy duties* encrease more and more : At the receiving of the *blessed Sacrament* my *heart* is still more enlarged, and more elevated with *heavenly comforts* ; and at *solemn humiliations* my *voyce* sometimes failes me, by reason of my *groanes* and *sighs* : I seldom rise from my knees, (on those days) but I see the floore watred with my *Tears* ; And even these *tears* are full of *comfort* and *pleasantness*.

I was wont to object against this course of strict life ; that it was full of heaviness and dulness ; no *comforts* at all in it : but now I perceive, as S. *Augustine* saith in  
the

the like case, *Vos habuistis Deum, & gavisus estis gaudio magno, etsi ego non habui Oculos*; Ye had your comforts, and rejoycings, though I had not eyes to discern them: now I bless God, that mine eyes are open, and I taste and see how gracious the Lord is, and that he bestows wonderfull comforts on them, who serve him.

And therefore I bless God who openeth his hand wide, & powreth out plentifully his comforts, upon me: And so much the more must I praise him, for this goodness of his, towards me, because (as you informe me in your letter) these comforts are not common to all ranks of holy Christians, but to *Beginners* chiefly; yea, and many there are (it seems) who both begin and continue on without them: And this special goodness and mercy of God bestowing such comforts and mercies on me, which he denies to many of His servants, who are more forward in holiness then I, requires my special praise and thanks to Him.

But that clause in your letter of *spiritual & sensible consolations*, I do not clearly apprehend; how (I pray) can there be sensible consolations in *Inward and spiritual Things*? Mine acquaintance with these

## 10 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

*consolations* is so young, that I cannot well distinguish between the one, and the other. Neither can I think I want *either* of them, and shall still hope that they will be *both* constant with me : But if you please to instruct me more fully in these *spiritual* and those *sensible Consolations*, plowing with your heifer, I shall resolve my self, and answer you. And so I commend you to God and rest

*Yours in the Lord.*

### *The Answer.*

*How to discern between spiritual and sensible Consolations.*

Sir,

**I** Am most ready to satisfy your desire, and I shal explain my meaning more fully, by answering your Question, [How can there be *sensible Consolations* in *inward* and *Spiritual* things?] before I propound my own.

The Apostle *Heb. 4. 12.* speakes of dividing between the *Spirit* and the *Soul* ; yea, i *Thes. 5. 23.* he does divide the *Spirit* and the *Soul*, and distinguishes as really the



the *Spirit* from the *Soul*, as the *Soul* from the *Body*, naming these three distinct in man, the *Body*, the *Soul*, and the *Spirit*; which may be ground for that which is sometimes said, *Man* consists of three parts: Of a *Nutritive part*, which receives nourishment, and growes; his *Body*, wherein he agrees with Trees and Plants. Secondly, of a *Sensitive part*, which hath inward and outward senses, which is the *Soul*, wherein he excels Plants, but yet agrees with Beasts. Thirdly, of a *Rational part*, which hath reason and understanding, wherein he excels Beasts, and agrees with Angels; which is called the *Spirit*.

Now, whatsoever *Consolations* there are in any other part of man, (except in this third only, the *Spirit*) are called *sensible Consolations*: and seeing we must be sanctified throughout in them all Three (which the Apostle exhorts to in that place) we may be comforted throughout also, in them all Three; and then it comes to passe, that many of those *Comforts* are outward and sensible, in Inward and Spiritual things.

But lest I should seeme to lay my Foundation upon an Antiquated distinction;

## 12 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

on, I wave this Tripartite, and divide Man into two parts only, the *Body* and the *Soul*: And yet now I must sub-divide the *Soul* (& bring this distribution of Man, in effect to the same with the other, as ordinarily all do) into a Lower Region, and an Upper; I mean, into Sensitive and Rational faculties; The lower Region or the Sensitive part, consists of the Inward senses, Imagination and Memory, &c. the Upper Region or Rational part, consists of the Understanding and Will. And though the *soul* of Man be *immaterial* and *spiritual*, and wholly *rational*, yet those operations of Hers, which are immediately by those *inward* (as well as those by our outward) *senses*, are properly enough, called the operations, or Acts of the *sensitive* soul.

And answerable to these two parts of the *soul*, there are *Spiritual*, and there are *sensible* Consolations: They which are in the upper and rational part of the *Soul* (the *understanding* and the *will*) are most properly called *spiritual*; And they which are in the lower, and sensitive part of the *soul* (the *phantasie* or *imagination*) though they be concerning *spiritual* things, are properly enough called *sensible* Consolations.

And

And these severall *Consolations* are intimated to us, by that of the *Psalmist*; *My heart, and my flesh delight in the Lord. Psal. 84. 2.* And the loss of both these in that other place where the *Psalmist* complains, *My heart, and my flesh faileth, Psal. 73. 26.*

Both these sorts of *Consolations* do oftentimes proceed from the *holy Spirit*, and in that respect, both sorts may be called *Spiritual*: But I take leave (as others do) to call onely those in the *heart spiritual Consolations*, because they have their abode in the heart, and *spirituall* part of *man*, and those in the *flesh*, I call *sensible Consolations*, because they have their life and abode in the *sensitive* part of *Man*.

Now concerning those *Consolations* in the exercise of *holy duties*, which fill our *understanding* and *will*, that they are raised by the *holy Spirit*, and also cherished by him, there will be little doubt; yet the *holy spirit* workes these severall wayes.

One while the *holy spirit* casts his beams of *Comfort* directly upon those *reasonable faculties* of the *soul*, and then they are the work of the *holy spirit* immediately. Another

#### 14 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

ther while the *holy spirit*, first, and directly shines upon the *outward* or *inward senses*, (the *phantie* and *imagination*) and from thence, by reflection (as it were) casts a lustre of *Comfort* up to the higher faculties, the *will* and the *understanding*; and then these *spiritual Consolations* are the work of the *holy Spirit* though *mediately*.

And concerning our *sensible Consolations*, they are raised by the *holy Spirit*, working severall wayes. One while the *holy Spirit* brings these *Comforts* into the *imagination*, or *outward senses* directly, and then they are the work of the *holy spirit* immediately; But another while the *holy spirit* administers great plenty of *Comforts* to the *will*, and *understanding*, and from thence they descend to the *imagination* and *senses*, the neighboring parts and faculties; And then these *sensible Consolations* are the work of the *holy Spirit*, though *mediately*.

Thus one while the *Mistresse (Reason)* is so full of joy, that she calls her *servants* and *neighbours*, (the *imagination* and *outward man*) to rejoyce with her; and otherwhile the *servant* is so full, that her *mistress* partakes with her; and so the whole

whole house (*upper and lower Region*) is filled with joy.

And yet, a time there is (of joy too) when it is not so plentiful; The *mistress* rejoicing, and the *servants* no way partaking of it; Or the *servants* rejoicing, and the *mistress* having no share in it: joy there may be in the *upper*, not in the *lower*; or in the *lower*, not in the *upper Region*: When it is, as the *womans* leaven, (a little, in a great lump) neither of them can diffuse their joy, and communicate it to the other.

And upon this ground it is, that I move my question, seeing there may be joy and comfort in the *inward* man, the wil and the understanding, and none in the *outward*; and on the contrary, there may be joy in the *outward* man (the *imagination* or so) and none at all, *above*; It wil be very material to resolve your self at least, of which sort your *comforts* are.

Especially considering that those joys above in the *wil* and *understanding*, are more joyous, and *delightful* far, then those in the *imagination* or *lower*: And as more *delightful*, so also, more *certaine* and *constant*, will abide longer with you, then the other; *spiritual*, then *sensible Consolations*.

Now,

## 16 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

Now, though you tell me, you have Both, that you want nothing that is called *comfort*, yet your *sensible consolations*, seem to me, to be most *predominant* in you; and that which inclines me thus to think, is your expressions concerning *sighs*, and *teares*, and the like, which are in the *sensitive and lower part of the soul*.

And these *Outward sensible Consolations* are of two sorts, (as you imply.) Either such as are *comfortable*, and *joyous* in themselves, when the *mouth is filled as it were with laughter*, the *face anointed with oile*, and the *whole outward man danceth with chearfulness*:

Or els, such as are *uncomfortable* in themselves, but do instantly bring forth the fruit of *comfort* and *joy*; as *sighs*, and *groanes*, and *teares*: all which proceed from *grief*, and therefore are not *joyous* in themselves, yet have *joy* and *Comfort* presently *resulting* from them: Though not *comfort in them*, yet *comfort comes with them*, and therefore they also are called *Consolations*.

And Sir, though you now *abound* with these *sensible consolations*, yet be pleased to think of *scarcity* and *want*, and to prepare for that time. Though you have now  
a most

a most pleasant *serenity* in your soul, yet *clouds* may appear, I fear, and darken it ; nay, I cannot promise, that you shall be secure from *stormes* and *tempests* : My prayer therefore for you shall be, that among the manifold changes of this life, you may never want those *true spiritnall joyes* of God, to whose grace I commend you, who am, in Him,

*Your Servant.*

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*The Third Letter.*

*Representeth those sensible Consolations decreasing, and the pious soul troubled thereat.*

Sir,

**Y**Our fore-warning was a *presage* too, and it is already come to pass ; my joy is turned into *heaviness*, and my *comforts* into *grief* ; Summer is past, and tempestuous winter is come upon me ; the Light, the light of Gods countenance is withheld from me, and darkness, Egyptian darknesse compasseth me round about ; so that I go mourning all the day long.

Heretofore I took great *delight* in the service and worship of God ; my *Prayers* were

## 18 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

were refreshments, yea, banquets to me; my Fasts and Humiliations, as corn and wine, did feast and cheer my Heart; By reading, or hearing Gods Word, or by meditating upon it, and by receiving the Blessed Sacrament, my soul became young and lusty as an Eagle, full of vigor, and comfort; But now dryness and sadness have taken hold upon me, and sorrow and grief overwhelm me.

In the exercise of Holy Duties, I am so little affected with comfort, and delight, that I grow now backward to them, and dull and drowsy in them; and those times which are set apart for the publick and solemn worship of God, seem now to me, (as the Sabbaths to them in *Amos*) most tedious and long.

Formerly my soul dwelt as in a fruitful, and pleasant land, alwayes full of the comforts of God, refreshed daily with the dew of his heavenly Grace; But now it wanders as in a barren, and dry wilderness, Where no water is; A wilderness Where I cannot find my God with his wanted favour and joy; dry, and no water in it, not the least dew from heaven to moisten and refresh it.

I was well aware that the delights of  
the



the world were fading, and transitory; but are these Christian comforts, these holy joyes so too? The fire and heat of Earthly Pleasures, I have oft seen suddenly quenched; and can that from heaven, heavenly, be quenched too? Oh that I had wings like a Dove that I might flee away to those comforts and Pleasures which never fail, where there is fulness of joy, and that for evermore!

With Holy Job, cap. 23. 8. I go forward, but my God is not there, and backward but I cannot perceive Him; On the left hand, and on the right hand, but He hideth himself from me: Then with the Sponse in the Canticles, I enquire of all that pass by, which way my Beloved was gone, and whither he was turned aside; And while I go sorrowing up and down to seek him, whom my soul loveth, The Egyptians (my companions formerly in sin) cry out against me, saying, For mischief was he led away from among us, that he might perish in a wilderness; Yea my Grand-enemy spies me wandering, and mocks and scoffs at me. The Delights (saith he) which I formerly allowed you, you have cast off, and your new Delights have cast off you: where is now your God? your late joy and comfort!

And

20 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

And these taunts and checks (beleeve me *Sir,*) make my other affections most grievous: Put to your Hand, I beseech you, and by your *spiritual* Direction ease me, what you can; In the mean time I shall not cease to pray, Restore me O Lord, to those joys again, and stablish me with those heavenly *Comforts*, for which I desire your frequent prayers also; for I am

*Your sad Friend.*

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*The Answer.*

*Directeth some means how the Pious soul  
may regain those sensible consolations;  
Or if not, reasons alleaged why she should  
satisfy her self without them.*

Sir,

**Y**Ours I received, and as I rejoyced before with you, when you did rejoyce, so now I mourn with you who mourn; and to take off some part of the grief from you, and my selfe, I embrace the first opportunity of writing, that I might in the beginning of your malady apply somewhat for it:

You

You aggravate your *present grief and sadness*, by reflecting much upon your *former Comforts, and Delights*, which is in effect to put those *Comforts* into the wrong *scale*: they should serve to *counter-poize* your *present sorrow, and dryness*; not to *weigh with* them, in *one*, and the *same* scale, but to *weigh against* them, in the *other*: and your *Argument* should be as *Jobs*; *I have received good things at the hand of God, and shall I not receive evil?* I have had a very liberal portion of the *sweetness* of the honey, for some years together, and shall I think much to taste of a little *wormwood and bitterness*, for a few daies? If you put *that* in the *one* scale, *this* in the *other*, it will be some ease to you.

But for the particular *Malady* which you complain of, I can but guess what your *Disease* is; and if I guess amiss, what I prescribe, I revoke before hand; onely if I find out your *Disease*, you may follow my directions for the *cure*, or the *ease* of it.

In this beginning of your *Disquiet*, I shall presume, That you want only those *sensible Consolations*, not those *spiritual*, those in the *lower part* of the *soul*, the *sensitive faculties*, not these in the *upper faculties*, of the *will and understanding*; and therefore

## 22 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

fore your first task will be, to consider, whether these *sensible* and *ourward Consolations* fail you, by reason of some *natural cause* in your self, your *Body* not so fitly disposed now, to receive the *impressions* of joy, nor the *imagination*, to form them, as formerly : Or by some *supernatural cause*, God withdrawing these *sensible Consolations* from you.

However, whether the cause be *Natural*, or *Supernatural*, the disease brings the *soul* to a great deal of perplexity and disquiet, and afterwards into dangerous hazards, and therefore some directions I shal prescribe.

Begin (it is best) with somewhat *inwardly*. Whereas you complain of your *heaviness* in *holy duties*, prepare your self for them, more solemnly then ordinarily, with a most *serious* meditation of *God*, to whom, and in whose presence, you are to perform those duties ; Make some impression in your heart, of his most glorious Majesty, and most dreadful presence ; and quicken this your meditation by recounting his infinite gooneſſe and mercy ; and specifie his mercies to your own soul ; and this wil dispose you (I hope) to that enlargement of heart, and *tenderneſs*, which  
you

you complain you want ; the *outward expressions of Love.*

If not, then to a *sadder* meditation upon the *severe justice*, and *righteousness* of God, reflecting all that while, upon your *own vileness*, and upon the *bitterness* of those punishments which you have deserved; the due consideration of this, will conduce much to those other *outward expressions of grief and sorrow.*

Represent God to your self, as a most merciful *Father*, as a most severe *Judge*, and as a most glorious & powerful *King*, and surely either *Love*, or *Grief*, or *Fear*, will bring forth some of your wonted *sensible Consolations.*

And then present your supplications to that *glorious*, that *merciful*, that *just God*, and beseech for this *tenderness of spirit.*

And with these *inwards*, apply *outwardly* Reverent prostrations, *humbly falling down*, & *kneeling* before his dreadful Majesty, *smiting your breast*, with the *Publican*, and then *lifting up your hands*, and *your eyes unto heaven*; and so to your other Devotions; which, though *secret*, with your self alone, yet if *Vocal* (in this case) you will be more likely to be affected  
outward.

## 24 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

outwardly at them : To which, you may adde, *singing of spiritual songs*, both with *voice & instrument* ; 1 Sam. 16. 23. 2 Kings 3. 16. you may read of greater matters, helped forward (to say the least) with *Musick and Instruments*.

These, and some such other means *outwardly* applied, (will I doubt not) restore you (by the grace of God) to your former health and *comfort* : Neither inward nor outward means must be neglected ; not *inward*, because these *comforts* are the *gift* of God , and must be obtained by prayer : not these outward, because the *Consolations* which you labour to re-gain, are *outward* and *sensible*, and therefore probably to be moved and stirred up in us, by our *outward* Actions, and deportment of body.

Other means to this purpose, you may read of in your Books, and some you may suggest to your self ; for you best know your own temper of body and soul, and therefore can prompt your self, what may be fit to be done, especially if you can recollect , *what thoughts* and imaginations were wont to raise them, in you, then you will use *those* again, as a ready means to recover them.

But,

But, if notwithstanding all these *means* used, you *continue* still in this state of *Dri-ness*, and *Barrenness*, and are no ways able to regain your former *Consolations*, be not, I pray, so much *dejected* (as you seem) for want of them, for this is to *disquiet your self in vain*.

In *vain* (I say) because you cannot *add one cubit to your stature*, your solicitousness cannot help you; Nay, this disquiet puls you lower still and lower; It is so far from *exalting* you towards *Comfort*, that it *depresses* you with deeper *sadness* and *grief*; It *thickens* the *darknesse*, not *dispels* it.

But chiefly it is in *vain*, because these *sensible Consolations* are not *tanti*; not so much worth; *Good* and *profitable* they are, because they make us *cheerful* and *plentiful* in the *work* of the *Lord*, but they are not so good, nor so *absolutely profitable*, as that you should be so sorely dismayed and dejected for the loss and want of them. And this is a *chief* thing in this *subject* of *Consolations*, and most *seriously* to be considered.

*Devotion* doth not consist in these *outward* and *sensible Consolations*, but in a *ready, active wil* and *purpose* to *conform*

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our

## 26 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

our selves inwardly and outwardly to the holy pleasure, and commands of God, and as occasion is given, executing the wit of God, and obeying his Laws ; this, this is pure Devotion. The outward Comforts (we speak of) are brought forth by this, this is the Mother, they are but Daughters : and they are cherished by this too, as the Daughter by the Mother ; however, sometimes it comes to pass, that as dutiful Daughters, they comfort and relieve the languishing Mother ; Devotion, (the Mother it self) is otherwhile supported by these Consolations.

Seeing then, the main and chief part of Devotion may be in the soul of Man, without the sensible feeling, and outward Comfort of it, if we have the Principal, let us be therewith content ; if this be present, though the other be absent, it is not so deeply to be bewailed : There are (I perswade my self) many Saints (in a high degree of glory) in Heaven, who never tasted here of these outward Consolations.

It is a common error to think that those exercises of Gods Worship, which we perform with these outward Consolations, are alway more acceptable to God, then those which affect us not this way.

To



To us indeed they are most acceptable, because of the *delight* which we have in such *softness* and *tenderneſs* of heart; but thoſe we perform in the *drineſs* of our *Souls*, may be as acceptable to God, as theſe: for God, who looks upon both the inward and outward man, regards the *Heart*, and *Spiritual* parts, more then the *Bodily*, and the *Senſitive* parts.

Yea, oftentimes *theſe* are more acceptable to God, then *theſe*; and the reaſon of it is this. Thoſe *Prayers* and *holy Duties* which we perform in our *drineſs*, (notwithſtanding we want the *Comfort* of them) are preſumed to proceed from a more *vigorous* *mil*: That *Heart* is more fully ſet upon the diſcharge of theſe *Duties*, which performs them *without* theſe *outward Comforts*, then that which performs them onely, *with them*: Here is no ſtream of *Comfort* to carry you on in your *Duties*, and if notwithſtanding, you go on as faſt, and as firm, as if they were, your *Heart* is full of *vigour*, and *active reſolution*, and therefore theſe *Duties* are moſt acceptable to God, and argue a very great love of God, and of his ſervice.

Wherefore, if all means being uſed to keep, or to recover theſe *ſenſible Conſolations*,

## 28 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

tions, you speed not, be not dejected at it : But in that case, *resign your self*, and your *desires and delights* wholly to God ; if he pleases to afford *them*, use *them*, and improve your *self* (as much as may be) by *them* ; If God stil denies *them*, improve your self *without* *them* ; and though *outward Comforts* decay, yet let the *inward* abound in you. Which you may most probably effect, if you continue resolute, and constant in all *holy Exercises* of Religion, & perform them all as duely, as heretofore, though now you have no sweetness, nor pleasant tast in them. For which I commend you to the mercy, and grace of God, in whom I am

*Your servant.*

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### *The fourth Letter.*

*Representeth the pious soul wholly deprived of sensible Consolations ; and spiritual Consolations decreasing in her.*

Sir,

I Apply my self to no other Ghostly director, and thereupon your trouble returns so quick ; I thank you for your last  
let.

letters, whereby I perceive that you have found out my *disease*, and therefore I was most diligent in observing your prescriptions; the bitterest pill is that in your last line, *that I should be as constant, and as full in my devotions and exercises of holy Duties in this my driness, and barrenness, as ever I was heretofore amidst my greatest Comforts and Consolations.* This seems a very hard duty, and (to return your own expression) as difficult, as to sail *without* a stream, (yea, and without *winde* too) as fast as *with* it: I have no *stream* of *Comfort* at all in my *Devotions*, no comfortable blast of the Spirit, to set me forward, and a heavie load of *dulness* and *drowsiness*, to retard me, and yet I must make as quick a dispatch, as when I had no such impediment against me, and a full stream for me: Yet for these late weeks, I have set my self strictly to observe that, and your other directions; But alas Sir, the more I struggle with my *disease*, the more it encreaseth upon me; My God sheweth me not the *light* of his countenance, but *hideth* his face more and more from me.

I was driven from the Land of *Canaan*, where I had an affluence of *Milk & Honey*,

### 30 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

ny, a full and constant possession of *heavenly comforts*, yet for a while I was suffered to abide, as on the Mountaine of *Pisgah*, where though I had not that *measure*, nor that *constantness* of comforts, as before, yet a *glimpse* now and then of that *Canaan* was afforded to me ; But now it is far worse with me, I seem confined to a low *vally*, whence I cannot espy the least part of that *Canaan* ; no degree of *heavenly comfort* allowed me ; and therefore, Sir, I have reason to conclude that this is a *desertion* not onely of *outward sensible consolation*, but also of *inward and spiritual* ; my *sufferings* abound *outwardly*, and no *consolations* *inwardly* ; The *reasonable faculties* of my *soul*, my *understanding* and my *will*, want their wonted *light* and *joy*.

Yea, while I relate it, this *spiritual desertion* growes upon me ; and though the other day, it was but a *partial privation* of comfort, the *degrees* of joy abated onely, in me, yet now it is a *total privation* of joy and comfort, for I am wholly bereft both of *sensible*, and *spiritual consolation* ; my *sensitive*, and my *reasonable faculties*, all of them, full of *darkness*, and *dulness*, and *barrenness*, and therefore,  
Sir,

Sir, I beseech you dispatch some further directions to

*Your languishing friend.*

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*The Answer.*

*Distinguisheth between a desertion of grace, and of comfort ; and that this may be inflicted by God, in love, on the best Saints on Earth ; and for what reasons.*

Sir,

**Y**ours I received, and think not strange that your disease should continue, yea encrease upon you.

There is a *Spiritual desertion of Grace*, and a *Spiritual desertion of Comfort* : The first, when God withdraws his *holy Spirit* and *divine Grace* from us, for some notorious sin committed against him. This latter, when he withdraws onely the joy, and comfort of that *Grace* which is still with us.

And this latter kinde of *Spiritual desertion*, may be in the best Saints of God, upon Earth ; I may desire, but I cannot hope (upon good grounds) any of them should be alway freed from it.

### 32 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

Now, *Sir*, this *spiritual desertion* of *comfort*, is inflicted upon us, one while in *Gods displeasure*: we neglect those *comforts* too much, or by some other sin, or infirmity, we provoke *God*, to call in those mercies, and to withhold them from us.

Otherwhile they may be withdrawn by *God*, and yet *not* in his *displeasure*; the *Sun* of righteousness may be as *bright*, behind the cloud, though not so *evident* to us; *Gods* countenance may shine towards you when it is thus intercepted from us.

Now whether *God* hath withdrawn *these comforts* from you in his *displeasure* against you, as a punishment for some sin, or otherwise, I cannot pretend to discover; upon examination of your self, you will be able to discover it, and to inform your self; And if it shall appear to you that this *desertion* is not inflicted upon you, in *displeasure*, then though both *sensible*, and *spiritual consolations* be denied you, and that *totally*, you need no salve (I trow) for that *sore*: It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good in his sight.

If thus, you may happily discover some greater *mercies* coming towards you, with  
with

with this your *driness & barrenness*. This *Spiritual desertion* may be inflicted upon you, either *Ob charitatis profectum*, as an incentive to love; God will hereby stir up a greater *love* in your *soul*, towards him, then formerly. He takes away these *comforts* from you because you loved them too much; And he would abate your *love* towards these *comforts*, that it might be bestowed more fully upon the *Comforter* himself: If God will not have any *love* of yours run wast upon *consolations*, but elevate it all to himself, you have no more reason to complain, then the *Child* from whom the *Nurse* is withdrawn, that the *Mother* might gain its chiefest affections: Or supposing God bestowed *comforts* (especially those *sensible*) on you, because of the infirmity of your condition, but now hath strengthened you to subsist without them, you have no more reason to complain, then the *Cripple* that is healed, for the loss of his *Crutches*.

Or Secondly, this *Spiritual desertion* may be inflicted upon you *Ob humilitatis custodiam*, as a preservative against pride: that *humility* may grow more in you; a *Thorne* in the *flesh*, lest you should be ex-

### 34 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

*alted above measure with the abundance of heavenly Consolations ; and if so, who will complain, though the honey, and the honey-comb, be taken away from him, when he hath eaten sufficient, and is in danger to surfeit by the rest ?*

Or for some other special *vertue*, which God wil now conveigh into your *Soul*. Thus some *Spiritual* advantage you may hope to gain, by this your *desertion*.

But on the other side, if upon examination it appears, or be probable, that God hath withdrawn these *Consolations* from you in *displeasure*, then you know your task is to enquire into your self, for what sin, or neglect, or omission it is, that God is so displeased with you ; and, when that is discovered, an unfained *humiliation* for it, and an earnest *endeavour* against it, for the time to come, is required at your hands.

Yet, after this *examination*, if you remain stil doubtful of the true cause of your *desertion*, so that you cannot reasonably enjoin your self, a special *humiliation* for any particular sin, as the *Actor*, or as accessory in it, a general *Humiliation* for your sins and corruptions, will certainly advantage you, and may probably ease you,



you, in this your present condition. And to this examination, together with that particular (if you find cause) or this general Humiliation, I now leave you, earnestly praying, that by these, or some other means, you may be healed, and sin no more.

Sir, I am

*Your servant in our Lord Jesus.*

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*The fift Letter.*

*The pious soul lamenteth the loss of her Comforts, as taken away in Gods displeasure; and proposeth an abatement of worldly Comfort, as a means to recover Spirituall.*

Sir,

**V**Pon a view of my Actions since the last solemn Humiliation of my soul, I find many defects and failings; and though I cannot charge my self with any one notorious sin unrepented of, (blessed be God my upholder) yet while I am compassed about with so many infirmities and imperfections, negligences and ignorances, I cannot but fear, too probably, that for some of those it is, that God, in displeasure, withdraws

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withdraws those his *comforts* from me.

And can there be a greater heart-sore then this, that my dearest *comforts*, should be taken away, yea driven away, from my self, by my self ! That I my self should be so deeply accessory to all those *desertions* I complain of ! That I my self should quench those holy *fires*, and then complain for want of the *warmth & comfort* of them ! That I should provoke God to hide his face, and to withdraw the light of his countenance from me, which I value infinitely more then all the pleasures, and profits, and honors of this world !

And now if I be constrained to dwell in this *Mesech*, and to have my habitations in these dark Tents of *Kedar*, what will my life profit me ! I will not return to the pleasures of the world, and what is my life then, if these *Pleasures* of heaven return not unto me !

Lord, can I not see thy face, & enjoy the light of thy countenance, constantly, and live ! Is it not then far better for me to die with it, then to live without it ! This *thy loving kindness is better then life it self*, Psal. 63.4. *therefore I will still seek thy face, thy face Lord will I seek.* Oh let me see it, and enjoy

enjoy it again, though I die for it ! Yet if it be thy will, my God and my Lord, that I walk all the daies of my life in this *Darkness*, that with these *disconsolate fears* and *tremblings* I work out my *salvation*, Loe I am ready to doe thy will O God.

Now, Sir, for the particular account you may expect from me of mine *examination* of my self, I must not conceal from you, that I have some jealousies, that worldly-mindedness may be shrewdly accessory to this my *desertion* : I am too busily (I fear) imployed in the things of this world, to have and retein that portion of heavenly comfort ; I traffick too much on this side *Jordan*, to have those sweets of the Land of *Canaan*.

That of our Apostle, 2 *Tim.* 2. 4. *Nemo militans Deo* ; no man that warreth under God, entangleth himselfe with the affaires of this world, is not (I conceive) proper to the Clergie, and Divines, but a general rule for all Christians also, who-soever fights under Christs banner, against the world, the flesh, and the Divil, must not be entangled with the things of this life. And though, Sir, I cannot charge my self with sin, in this kind, being

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being entangled beyond the bounds of lawfulness, with earthly things, yet I consider, that my worldly employments, though lawful, may not be expedient; for I have read in my books of Devotion, that whosoever takes his full lawful pleasure in the things of this world, to such an one, God (commonly, and most justly) denies the extraordinary pleasures and delights of his Spirit; and one way prescribed, not to be scantied in these *spiritual comforts*, is by abating somewhat of the full lawful measure of these *worldly comforts*. The neglect of this I fear, may be one reason why God withdrawes his wanted *spiritual comforts* from me.

If I could abridge my self a little more of that delight I take in the study of Historie, Philosophie and the like; if I could abate some little of that comfort I solace my self with, in friends and children; if I could be a little more strained in these *worldly comforts*, I should well hope to be enlarged again, in those *spiritual comforts*: I shall therefore labour to satisfie my self with some few *Omers* of worldly joy, though an *Ephah* be but a lawful measure; who knoweth but God may turne my former *Omer* of spiritual joy,

joy, into an *Ephah*, and give it me, heaped up, and running over? I read of some who have sped thus by it, and therefore I shall hope for the like mercy from God, and this hope is some support to

*Your fainting friend.*

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*The Answer.*

*Adviseeth to love the Comforter himself more than the Comforts.*

Sir,

**Y**OU delight (it seemes) in *Corrosives*, (as most in your condition do) more then in *Cordials*; you insist only upon Gods *displeasure* against you, in taking away your *Consolations*, not at all reflecting upon the *Cordial*, that these may be taken away in *love*.

Yea, though God be offended with you for your many failings and imperfections; Yet an offended God (howe're it is with an offending friend) may afflict in *Love*. Now, after you have cast down your soul by *Humiliation*, raise it up, I pray, by the *meditation of this*. Your *Love*, that most precious and excellent affection of your  
*Soul,*

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soul, shall by this *desertion*, be advanced to God, and appropriated to him alone. Then you may see how weak that Love is, when we love God onely, or chiefly for that parcel of *Mercy*, or *comfort* which he is pleased to communicate to us; and that the *strength* of love is, to love that infinite *mercifulness*, and incomprehensible *goodness*, that is in *him*; to love God more for that *Ocean* in himself, then for these few *drops* he sheds down upon us; for his own *goodness*, more then for our *benefit*, or *comfort* by it: this, this is the *strength* of love. And if your former *comforts* hindred you from this love of God, your present *desertion* may further you to it; & when it hath strengthend your *Love*, it will encrease your *Humility* also; Gods *cheerful* countenance towards you may (unhappily) *exalt* you, but you cannot but walk *humbly* before a *frowning* God: And where this *love*, and this *humility* is, patience wil have its perfect work. Which I speak the rather of; because this *drought* and *barrenness* of our *Souls* may through the corruption of our Nature, & the temptation of the Divil, occasion some *impatience* in us. As an Antidote therefore against *impatience*, I beseech you

to consider that there are many dear children of God, who never tasted at all of those *Comforts*, whereof you have had store; and then you wil turn your *complaints* for the present want of them, into *Praises* for your former enjoyment of them; and after that *Hymn* of *thanksgiving*, you may close your *Meditations*, and *Devotions*, with a *Collect* or two, that God would call to remembrance his tender mercies, and his loving kindness which he hath shewed to you heretofore; In which I shall be a joynt-suitor with you, but especially for all *Spiritual Graces* which are needful for you, and so I rest

*Yours in our Lord Christ.*

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*The sixth Letter.*

*The pious soul still lamenteth the loss of her Comforts, yet wholly resigneth her desires of them to Gods will.*

Sir,

**I** Peruse your *directions* daily, for I am still in my *disconsolate* condition, my *driness*, my *driness*, woe is me! I cannot dissemble it. Those *Comforts* have held  
up

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up my weary hands, in *prayer*, they have strengthened my feeble knees ; In the public *Congregation*, in my private *closet*, meditating in the *field*, and on my *bed*, at all times, and upon all occasions, they have been my companions, and my supporters also. They have made me more forward in *Christian duties*, more cheerful in them, and more plentiful of them, then otherwise I fear I should have been; but now they have all forsaken me, and I am left weak : Heretofore how freely could I resign up my selfe to God, and his service ? when I consider it onely, as a yeelding up my self to a continual affluence of Heavenly comforts & pleasures; How easie was it for me to despise the delights and vanities of this world, when I abounded with those ? And who can part with such bosom-friends, who have been so helpful and beneficial, and not complain ? The loss of the *pleasure*, and *delight* I took in them, was grievous, but this loss of *help* and assistance from them is an heavy burthen.

But these very *helps* and advantages which I have had by *consolations*, may come (you have told me) without them ; yea, sometimes these their proper works may



may be performed, better without *them*, then with *them*. And that is it I enquire after now. I bless God that he hath afforded me that *comfort* and *help* of those *pleasures*, thus far onward in my way, and I trust to him now for other *guides* and *helps*.

And hereupon I resolve (Gods grace assisting me) to cast off my solicitous, and anxious care about *them*; Desire *them* I shall, and seek *them*, because I can be *helped* by *them*, but after that (if I find *them* not) I shall not complain so loud, because I trust to be *helped* without *them*; And I shall close those *Collets* (you advise to) for these *Consolations*, with *Non mea, sed Tua, fiat voluntas, Domine*. Not mine O Lord, but thy will be done: for though I be denied *them*, yet in my driness wil I continue my *service* (such as it is) to thee my God, and by thy grace persevere in it to my lives end. For the performance of which, I desire the benefit of your prayers, whereby you shall still oblige

*Your engaged friend.*

*The*

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### *The Answer.*

*A Cautiō, lest the soul, being now-indifferent whether she hath Comfort or not, should prove slothful in holy Duties.*

Sir,

**I** Beseech God to strengthen you in your humble, and free submission unto his blessed will; and though he still hide his countenance from you, yet you promise to serve him, to bring him what your *dulness* and *Barrenness* wil allow you to have, and from him, you shall receive, what you have not: If not your *former*, yet some *other helps* and supplies; yea, the Lord himself wil be your *Companion* and your *Guide*: Cast all your care upon him, and he wil take the full care of you: And if he leads you no further by the glimmering light of a *Star* (your own Consolations and delights) it is (I hope) because he will shew you the bright lustre of the *Sun* it self, that *goodness* and *mercifulness* which is in himself, and by that lead you, and guide you to your journies end.

And

And concerning those *prayers*, and holy *exercises*, which you perform to God, in this your *barrenness* and *drought*, seeing *they* are not undertaken at all for any *taste*, or *sweetness* you have in *them*, but purely to serve God, and meerly and alone to perform his will, surely *they* are very acceptable in his sight: I know *this barrenness* is seldom without objections against the performance of these *duties*, as if *they* might be as well left undone, as done; But you will be able (I hope) to answer all those oppositions, and contradictions, and force your will, against your will, to go on stil in discharging those holy *duties*, as wel as you can, and as chearfully, though not so wel as you would.

There goes alway along with these our *Consolations*, self-love, and sometime too much of it too; It will concern us therefore to moderate it; to that purpose, when we purpose to our selves, the exercise of any *duties*, or the practice of any Chrilitian *vertues*, our own interest, Pleasure, or advantage (spiritual though they be) must be the least things we aime at, lest self-respects blemish all. And if thus, (though in the depth of *desertion*) our love is more commendable, and those  
duties

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duties and *vertues* more acceptable to God, for whose sake wholly we perform them, then those *exercises* and *duities* we formerly had so much comfort in; and upon this *reason* I stil advise you, not to set too high an esteem upon these *Consolations*, your own delights.

Yet here I think fit to enter a *Caveat* or two. I have known *Torpor* and *Acedia*, indevotion and sluggishness come under this vail; while we pretend not to affect these our own *delights*, *coldness* in our *Praiers*, and *laziness* in our *Devotions* too commonly creep in upon us. Take heed therefore that you retain your inward *fervor* and spiritual *zeal*, in the midst of your *driness*, and *barrenness*; you must beware lest you lose your *fervor*, as well as the *sense*, and the *Comfort* of it. Let not your *intention* and *attention* in your *Devotions* any whit abate (if possibly you can prevent it) while your outward *Consolations* are denied to you. It is a chief design the Devil hath upon us in these our *desertions*, to make us *weary* of the service of God, and to steal away from us our *Devotions*, and our *fervor* too.

And now seeing you have attained  
(God

(God be thanked) to such a condition and state, that you submit your self wholly to God, and wil be content, though he stil withhold these your *Consolations*, this is a time, that the *Devil* is ordinarily busie to dart in those his *temptations*; And if he can bring in, with this your *indifferency*, *oscitaney*, and *coldness*, in those *services* you perform, and a *laziness* in holy *Duties*, he gains too much upon you.

A second *Caveat* I shall add, with respect to others, rather then to your self at present ; That they who abound with these *Comforts*, be not too *secure*, upon the ground of *Consolations* (especially if they be *sensible* ones onely) that their persons and performances are accepted with God ; that they make not these the (*τὸ κριτήριον*) chief trial and testimony of their *Justification* and *Sanctification* ; the *testimony* of their *Faith* and *Repentance* cannot deceive them, these *Consolations* may.

But all this is added, *ex superabundanti* ; Since your full *resignation* of your *desires* and *delights* to God, and your *indifferency* for these *Consolations*, this *advise* might have been spared : nothing is now necessary from me, but my prayers  
to

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to God for you, wherein I shall never fail you, for I am

*Your servant in Christ Jesus.*

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*The Seventh Letter.*

*The soul feeleth (as she conceives) a partial privation of grace, and growing suspicious of the sincerity of her faith and repentance, fearing a total privation of grace in her.*

Sir,

**T**hat intimation of yours, that your advise to me might be spared hereafter, hath these many months kept back my hand from writing to you, but now I can withhold no longer, and your former trouble breaks in upon you.

Not that I have revoked my *resignation* of those my *Consolations*, to Gods blessed will, far be it from me ; But in another matter, ( as I conceive ) and of higher concernment, I now make my address to you, for *direction* and *comfort*.

That *total privation* of *comfort*, under which I have so long laboured, hath now at length brought on me (I fear) a *Partial* privation

privation of *Grace*. My *sensible comforts* are gone, and my *spiritual comforts* are still detained from me, and now I doubt that even *grace* it self, is decaying too; *Joseph* is not, and *Simeon* is not, and shall I lose my *Benjamin* also? all these things are against me.

Sir, I have endeavoured what I could to keep my soul *vigilant*, and my affections erect, and *attent* at *Praiers*, (according to your caution to me) but now they all slack, and a general *drowsiness* duls them all, at the howr of praier, more then at any other time, at that spiritual, more then at any civil employments; And ther-upon I complaine, that the *grace* of *fer-vor* and *zeal* is departed from me; and in other holy *duties* the *cheerfulness*, and *ardor* I was wont to have, doth now wholly fail me.

When I read of some of the servants of God, who were so elevated in their *Devotions*, and *Meditations*, that *whether in the Body, or out of the Body, God onely knowes*; and then reflect upon mine, now adaies so *heartless*, and so dul, that whether with the *soul*, or without the *soul*, it is hard to say; that while I am at those holy *exercises*, my *soul*

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should

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should be carried any whither, rather then into *heaven*, yea, *downward* rather then *upward*, this presseth me sore. How can such service be *reasonable* from me, who have a *spiritual soul*? or *acceptable* to God, who is a *Spirit*, and must be worshipped in *Spirit*? This I lament as a *privation* of that *grace* of *Fervor* and *zeal*; My *soul* is not filled with it now, as formerly.

Neither may I dissemble it, sometimes I fear *worse*, even a *total* privation of *this*, and of all other *graces*, and *vertues*; Either that God hath withdrawn his *holy graces* from me, or else that I was never truly partaker of *them*; that I flattered, and deceived my self, when I hoped that God had accepted my *Faith* in Christ, and my *Repentance* to my *justification*.

The other day while I was judging my self for my *sins*, an *allegation* was cast in, against my *Repentance* also, and that was accused of *unsincerity*, and *hypocrisie*; And proof was brought in of it; My *grief* and sorrow for my *sins*, was compared with my *sorrow* for other things; The small *bottle* of my *penitential tears* was brought forth, and set by the *bottle* of my *tears*, for *worldly crosses*; and

it



it appeared how *enlarged* I had been in these, and how *straitned* in those; that I have *wept* far more for the loss of a friend, or of a pension for some yeares, then for the invaluable loss of my Lord God, eternally; And this plea was prosecuted against me, with a great deal of importunity; and though I my self was both the *advocate* & the *judg*, in the case, yet I could not be so partial, either in *pleading*, or in *determining*, as to *acquit* my self; But upon this *proof* and *evidence* was forced to *condemn* that *repentance* (mine own though it were) as *feigned* and *unsincere*, or *incompleat* at least, and therefore *unacceptable* in the sight of God.

And upon this, how *heavy* and *sad* my guilty *soul* is, cannot be expressed; since this my *Benjamin* is miscarried too, *sorrow* will soon bring me to the grave.

And then, when I am thus low, it is hard to keep my self from sinking lower; for *allegations* I find produced against my *Faith* and my *Love* to God: and thus it is reasoned. If I have not true *faith*, all I have done yet, is stil *fruitless*, I am stil in my *unregenerate* condition; But if I have not true *love* to God, I have not

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true *Faith*, and if I have not joy in God, I have not *love* of him. These are fruits of the same *Spirit*, and where one is, the other cannot be wanting; *Love* results naturally from *Faith*, and *Joy* from *Love*, and they continually accompany each other; these fruits are alway in a cluster: or they are all links of one chain, if any one link be taken off, the chain is quite broken: Seeing then apparently I want *Joy*, how can I have *Love*? and if I have no *Love*, I am not better then a sounding Brass and a tinckling Cymbal.

Alas Sir, I cannot alway keep these *Allegations* against my self, out of the court of my *Conscience*; And though I condemn my self very often, yet I dare not be too peremptory, in these judgments against my self, for I cannot but hope better things: And whether I should cherish those feares (which are strong already) or these weaker hopes, is that, wherein I desire your advise and counsel; And the Lord, who onely knoweth the spirits of men, direct you in it: this is the prayer of

Your assured friend

The

The Answer.

*Prescribeth a strict examination of her Faith and Repentance: and sheweth these fears and jealousies may be the Temptations of the Devil.*

Sir,

**W**Hether you should take part with *Fear* or *Hope*, you your self must resolve: yet somewhat I shall say, concerning the *feares* which arise in you, that you are not *justified* before God, nor *reconciled* to him.

It is good to fear alway; it keeps us *low*, lest *pride* enter; and it keeps us *active*, lest *sloth* seize upon us; and so we humbly labour, to make our *Calling* and *Election* sure; and when I sadly consider, how many miscarry through *Spiritual security*, not at all suffering themselves to mistrust their condition towards God, I am not forward to cast out *fear*: Yet there is *torment* in *fear*, and a firm *hope*, wel grounded, (if it ejects not fear it self) wil wholly allay the *torment* of it.

Whether your *Faith* and *Repentance*

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were as they ought to be, is between God, and your own soul: But if your *faith* were *lively*, with *love*, and trust in God, and your *repentance* *unfeigned*, assure your self, it was no other *Spirit* but the holy *Spirit* of God, (who can neither deceive us, nor can be deceived) who said unto your soul, *Christus & iustitia tua, & salus tua; Christ is thy justification, and thy salvation.*

And for the *Plea* put in against your *Repentance*, though I cannot discern what your *Repentance* is, yet this I can discern, that your *objection*, is no convincing *argument* against the *Truth* and *sincerity* of it.

For though I must grant that the inward *sorrow* for *sin*, and the inward *sorrow* for *worldly* losses, are both from the *heart*, and *griefs* both of the same kind, yet it will not follow, that they both should have the same *outward expressions*; For there may be an *heart* full of true *sorrow* for *sin*, where there is no *sad countenance*, no *trembling lips*, nor *weeping eyes*; these are the *overflowings* of *grief* in the *sensitive* parts, and are more readily, and more fully shewed by us, for *worldly*, then for *spirituall* matters:  
and

and the reason is this ; Because these *sensitive* parts, (whence they proceed) are more affected with *bodily* and *worldly* things, then they are (or can be) with *spiritual*, and *heavenly* ; and the reason of this, is, because *worldly* things are *neer* these *sensitive* parts, whereas *spiritual*, are *far off*; and thereupon have a greater command over outward *sensitive* expressions, (as *tears* and the like) then *spiritual* things can have over them, at a diltance.

I desire therefore that you would examine your *sorrow* for *sin*, *above*, not *below*; at the *spring-head* of *sorrow*, your *heart*; and *reasonable soul*, not at these *neather pools*, your *eyes*, and the *tears* of them; by that you cannot easily be deceived, by these you may.

And if upon *examination*, you find that your *heart* hath been, and is truly *humbled* for your *sins*, and afflicted at the remembrance of them ; and doth also firmly *resolve* against *them* for the time to come ; if you be sorely *displeased*, both with the *sinner*, and with the *sin*, *abhorring* your *self*, and your *transgression*, you may *cherish* and *confirm* your *hopes*, that God is *reconciled* to you, through *Christ*. If you can produce these *rational*

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*testimonies* (which are grounded upon the *Word of God*) be not I pray very solicitous for the *testimony* of your *sensitive faculties*.

And after the *examination* of your *sorrow* for sin, if you think fit to be so strict with your self, as to require that this your *grief* for sin, should exceed that your *grief* for *worldly* things, yet it is very unreasonable, and against all rules of *Courts*, to condemn your *sorrow* for sin as defective, upon the bare *testimony* of these *outward expressions*; for as they are a *single witness*, so (now it appears to you) they are a *partial witness* too. Enclining more to *sorrow* for *worldly* things (and giving fuller *evidence* for them) then to *sorrow* for *spiritual* things: and therefore til it be otherwise proved, and fully too, that your *sorrow* for sin, is *unsincere*, pass not I pray, your sentence of *Condemnation* upon it.

And yet before you need *acquit* it, you may examine the neighbouring *Passions* of your *soul*, about this very matter of your *reconciliation with God*. If there appear no *unsincerity*, or *hypocrisie*, in your *love* of God, and in your *hatred* of sin, you have little reason to suspect your *repentance*:

pentance : And for trial of the sincerity of these *Passions*, I pray suppose your self in such a strait, that you must either lose houses and possessions, wife, and children, and honour, or the favour and love of God, by committing those your former sins again : and then consider which of these two you would choose : and if you resolve (by the grace of God assisting you) to lose all the profits, pleasures, and comforts of this world, rather than the favour and love of God by a relaps into sin, your love and hatred being thus sincere and upright, you must then in justice acquit your repentance and sorrow from that aspersions of hypocrisie and unsincerity, and censure him for a slanderer who cast in that allegation against it.

And now for that other allegation against your faith and love, because of the absence of joy, I desire you to consider, that,

There is a joy which is the fruit of the spirit, and it constantly ariseth from faith in God, and love of him ; and there is the fulness or superabundance of that joy : the first is a small ray only ; the second as a beam from the Sun of Righteousnes ; and both these are gifts of the blessed Spirit, and yet very different ; the first as a

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Grace,

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*Grace*, the second as a *Reward*; that *ray* of joy is a *grace* of God, and by the *light* of it, we may keep our feet from stumbling and falling; this *beam* of joy, is a *reward* from God, and by the exceeding *lustre* of it, we are encouraged and cheared in our walking with God: and hence it appears that the *first* is a most necessary *fruit* of our *Faith* and *Love*, and doth always accompany them. We *love* him not unless we *rejoyce* in him, and of this joy is the Apostles precept, *Rejoyce in the Lord alway*, and again *I say, rejoyce*: whereas this *second* is a bountiful expression of Gods extraordinary *goodness* towards us, not an ordinary *grace* in us; a fore-tast (indeed) of the joys of heaven: The *first* is as the Christian souls *daily bread*; this *second*, as their *festival cheer*.

Now Sir, if you have that *daily bread*, you are of Gods household and family, though you seldom taste of his *festival cheer*: and I hope you want only those *dainties* which once you were fed with, and that this *Bread*, which is common to all the family, is your *souls daily Food*; that you have still in you a *ray* of joy, though not a *beam*: and if so, this joy is a good evidence of your sincerity in *Faith* and



and *Love*; and therefore you may censure him also for a *slanderer*, who cast into the court of your conscience, this *allegation* against your *Faith* in God, and *Love* of him.

Thus Sir, I comfort my self with *hope*, that you neither flattered your self heretofore (in accounting your self *reconciled* to God through Christ) nor that there is such a *total privation* of *Grace* in you, as you complain of.

And for that *partial privation* of *Grace*, the abatement of your *fervor* in *prayer*; in answer to that I shall premise, First, that there is a *gift* of *Prayer*, and a *spirit* of *Prayer* or *Supplications*; and many have the *gift* of *Prayer*, (to express their own, or other mens desires to God in *Prayer* readily, and in fit words) who have not the *spirit* of *Prayer* and *Supplications* (that is, *Fervor* and *Zeal*, and *Ardency* of *Spirit*) and on the contrary, many have this *grace* of *fervor*, who have not that *gift* of *Prayer*; and of this *sanctifying* *Grace* (*fervor* & *zeal*) it is (as I conceive) the Prophet *Zachary* speaks, not of this *gift* of *Prayer*, which is only an *edifying* *grace*.

Secondly, that exact *intention* and perfect *fervor* with all our *heart*, and all our  
mind

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*mind* in the whole *Worship* of *God*, is a *Treasure* not ordinary in these *earthen Vessels* ; while we carry about this *body* of *flesh*, the *spirit* and *imagination* of man will be wandring oft-times, and we cannot be wholly *intent* in the *Service* of *God*.

Now Sir, your complaint is not (I perceive) for want of the gift of Prayer, (*expressions in supplications*) but for the decay of the fervor and zeal you formerly had : but whether you charge your self with that *infirmity* of our *mortal state* and condition only, that you are not wholly *intent* and *attent* at your *Prayers* ; or whether you complain as guilty of some *notorious wandrings* of thoughts at your performance of *holy Duties*, which are truly *personall faults*, I understand not, and therefore I answer somewhat to both.

*Exact* and *ful intention*, with all our *Soul*, in the *Worship* of *God*, we must *aim* at, and *strive* for, and *lament* our defects in it ; Our vain *imagination*s, our worldly *thought*s, and what ever divert us from the *attention* to that *holy business*, we have in hand, though we *consent* not to them, nor *stay* upon them with any *delight*, but *reject* them as fast as they arise in our *minds* ; yet these, and every  
one

one of these we must *lament* and bewail, and be *displeased* with our selves for those our *failings*; *lament* these I pray as the *natural infirmities* of your *condition* in the *flesh*, though (as I conceive with submission to better judgements) *not as your personal faults and sins*: these argue not any decay of the *grace* and *fervor*, only an *imperfection* in it, as there is of all *graces* in the best Saints of God on earth.

But then, secondly, if your complaint be of some *notorious wandrings*, some *stay* upon vain *imaginations*, and some *delight* in them, which take your *soul* off from its *intention in Prayer*; these are *sins* and *personal faults* in you.

And even these *sins* are too common with many of the *Children of God*, and therefore it is not improbable you may complain of *them*.

And this *indevotion* and want of recollecting our thoughts home, while we are at *holy Duties*, is sometime a *cause* of our *drought* and *barrenness*; we use not well that *talent* of *fervor* and *zeal* which God gives us, we stir it not up, and thereupon we grow *barren* and *dry*: and another while, this is the *effect* of our *barrenness*, we want our former *comforts* and *delights* in *holy*

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*holy duties*, and thereupon we cannot be so intent at them as formerly. These our *comforts* are (as you allude) like *Aaron* and *Hur* to *Moses*, very useful to hold up our *weary hands in prayer*:  *fervor*, and *intention* do ordinarily decrease for want of *comforts & delight* to support and strengthen it.

Now if this decay of *zeal* and *fervor* be in you, as the *cause* of your *barronness*, I need not say how severe you should be in *judging* your self for bringing all these inconveniences upon your own *soul*, by your own *sins*; and if as the *effect* of this your *barronness*, yet repent you must of your *neglect* of this *grace* of *God*, that you should stir up this your *fervor* no longer, then it was for your own turn (your *comfort and delight*) when that could not be served by it, that you *neglect* it, and suffered it to decay in you. And then after this, you must endeavour to *strengthen your feeble knees*, and to *hold up your heavy hands*, that your *soul* may recover daily, and increase again to its wonted *fervor*, and then go on beyond your former measure, adding *fervor* unto *fervor*, and *strength* unto *strength*. It is for *Gods* cause and for the *Love* of him you are *fervent* in this your  
bar-

barrenness, and therefore let it far exceed that fervor you were wont to have for your own sake, because of your own comforts with it.

But now, as I must not sooth you up in the least degree of *sin*, or want of due fervor, and therefore I have said this; so on the other side, I must not suffer you to be dejected and cast down without a just cause, and therefore I shall say more, and tell you, *I hope better things of you.*

The quick sense you have of your want of fervor, and the present grief which you express redounding from it, is a probable Argument to me, that your fervor is as much at present as formerly it was, though it be not so sensible to you; and neither that grace of fervor, nor any other in you, can be so evidently perceived by you, while you labour under that total privation of comfort (whereof you complain) as at other times they may.

And if so, that which you complain now of, is only this, that the wonted comfort of your fervor and zeal (which formerly you had in Gods service) is now withdrawn from you, so that you can neither feel your comfort, nor your fervor; not that your fervor is abated, but that the com-  
forts

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*forts* in which it did reflect to your ey, are taken away for you; it is not now to be discerned by *them*. And then it wil appear it is Gods *mercy* you want in *Comforting*; not his *Grace* in *assisting* you in *his Worship*; and so it is the same disease you complained of before, though now it comes towards the height & violence of it. Or secondly, is not this very *fervor* and *zeal* of yours working elsewhere? though it appeares not in your *Closet*, to you *Praying*, yet it may work in your *Parlour*, at your *Table*, and in your *Visits* abroad: Do you not perceive it *mortifying* and *subduing* those *Corrupt-affections* and *desires* which were wont to presse upon you, at your *Meales*, and in your *Discourses*?

If so, this is the *fervor* and *zeal* of *Prayer* about another work, in another Room. We usually brand *Those* deeper who neglect their *houres* of *Devotion*, then *Those* who restrain not the *exorbitancies* of their *Affections*: And on the contrary we usually set a better Character upon *Those* who are punctuall at their *houres* of *Devotion*, and constantly *feruent* in *Them*, then upon *Those*, who obtaine frequent *victories* over their *Corruptions*.

A

A *fervent Suppliant* is of more esteem (ordinarily) then a *Valiant Champion*; and the reason hereof, is, because every *fervent Suppliant* is presumed to be a *Valiant Champion* also: Let me then (I pray) have my liberty to presume that every *Valiant Champion* who overcomes his *Lusts*, is a *fervent Suppliant*.

And therefore Sir, if with *S. Paul*, you mortifie and die daily, *1 Cor. 15. 31.* with him you pray also continually, *1 Thes. 5. 17.* and with him you are instant also in Prayer, *Rom. 12. 12.* Consider, I pray, what I say, and the Lord give you understanding to discern aright what your wants are, and how they may be supplied: to that purpose I shal pray for you, as becometh.

*Your servant in Christ.*

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*The*

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## 66 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

### The eighth Letter.

*The soul farther complaineth of a total privation of grace, somewhat too evident in her, because she wants all spiritual joy.*

Sir,

**T**He want of those *dainties* (as you term them) cannot but trouble me, that once I should have *fulness of joy*, but now unworthy of it, be thrust down, as I deserve, to a *lower mess*; but now and then I fear, that even the *daily bread* (you speak of) is denied unto me: yea, the *crumbs which fall from my Lords Table*, so little joy and delight I find in *holy Duties*: and further, if sometimes I have, instead of bread a *stone*, hard and dry, without any softness and moisture, surely then I want not only those *dainties* and *delicacies* for my pleasure and comfort, but even this bread for my *nourishment*: and this hard fare hath made me so moderate in my desires, that though I have not such an *allowance of joy*, as is expedient to commend my love, yet if I could constantly perceive that portion of joy in me, which is necessary to evidence that a love there is in me, I should rest satisfied with it, and possess my soul  
in



in peace and quietness: for what greater *comfort* need I desire then this, that my joy and love is such as is acceptable in Gods sight; and that notwithstanding my manifold imperfections I am in the favor of God through Christ? If I be of Gods family, though but a *dore-keeper*; if I be at his *table*, though of the *lowest mess*, this would be a great *comfort*, and a full satisfaction to me.

But alas, Sir, instead of my former *Owner* of joy, I do not now find this *Epha*! And if my joy wholly fails, what love can there be in me? and now of late I have been searching up and down my soul for those other *graces* and *virtues* which Gods Spirit had formed in me; and whereas they should grow and increase more and more, for a while they also have languished in me, and now (I fear) they are quite dead: my *comforts* were no sooner taken away from me, but these *graces* I perceived maimed and sorely lamed in me, when I was once stripp'd of them, I presently felt my self wounded in these *vitals* of grace and virtue; but now I am quite stripp'd (I fear) of these two, *spoliatus consolatione*, & *spoliatus gratiâ* also. Not onely wounded in Grace, but stripped as bare of it, as of Comfort.

Thus

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Thus I seeme to void those good hopes you still nourish in you, concerning my being in the state of *Grace*; But especially those you last mention of my *fervor* and *zeal*. I am a *Weak Suppliant* (God help) and a *weaker Combatant*.

Indeed if I should perceive my *Zeal* working, onely while I am on my *Knees*, and not otherwayes also; in my *Closet*, and not *elsewhere*, I dared not approve my self for *that*; I was wont to aime at being a *stout Combatant*, as well as a *Fervent Suppliant*: But now, not onely my *Knees* are feeble, but also my *Hands*, and no *Zeal* at all to be perceived, either in raising up my *Affections* at *Prayer*, or at other times in beating down my *Lusts* and *Corruptions*.

And when I plead for my *Excuse*, (as you suggest I may) my *Natural Infirmary*, I fear lest that should be *Self-flattery*. I am too prone to flatter my self in my *Original weaknesse* and *corruption*; so that otherwhile I impute even my *Licentiousness* to my *Natural Infirmary*: I am actually *slothful*, and will not, and then I excuse it, that I am naturally *weak* and *cannot*.

If I could strive against these *natural Corruptions*, & lament them (a caution you warily

warily annex to excuse) then, and not else, will they excuse me. But as I now am, I am, (as I said) without *Comfort*, without *Grace* (I fear) especially without that of *Fervor* and *Zeal*, and without *Excuse* too.

My *sins*, my *sins*, have excluded all the *comforts* of God, and all the *graces* of God also, from my *soul*; I am less then the least of them all: I call to mind the dayes that are past, when my *soul* enjoyed a sweet *communion* with God, when there were continual *entercourses* full of unspeakable *comfort* between my *Lord* and my *soul*; when he was pleased frequently to lead me into his *banqueting house*, and there *cheer* me with *flagons* and *apples*; when my *soul* was *elevated* and *staid up* with his *consolations* and *graces*; and when I recall this, my *soul* sinks into the vally of *sorrow*. For now my *God* passes by me as a *wayfaring man*, and is become a *stranger* unto me, *visits* me not, either with *comforts* or *grace*.

And when I hear my *God* aggravating *Solomons sin*, because he had shewed himself unto him twice, 1 *King.* 11.9. I tremble and fear lest that should be a *charge* against me also, that, after *God* had *appeared* unto me,  
with

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with most kind visits of comforts, & with a most sweet fellowship of graces, so long together, day by day, I should provoke him by my transgressions to withhold these good things from me.

But Lord, though my soul faint for these thy mercies, yet will I hope in thy word; though mine eyes fail with looking after thee, saying, when wilt thou comfort me? though I am become like a bottle in the smoke (parched and dry, filthy and unfit for any service in thy Tabernacle) yet will I not forget thy power nor thy mercy, Psalm. 119. v. 82. &c. Thou who gavest these first, canst, and wilt restore them to me again; if I be beyond cure and cannot be healed (because I am dead, and my vitals of grace perished) yet I may be revived: Enliven and quicken me (O Lord I beseech thee) after thy loving kindness, and so shall I keep thy testimonies: Joyn with me, I pray Sir, in these my Praiers, for I am

*Your friend and*

*Servant in Christ.*

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The Answer.

*Graces may be in the soul, and not perceived by the soul ; some have spiritual joy, and feel it not, because they wil not ; others cannot.*

Sir,

**I**Am heartily sorry that your *fears* and *jealousies* concerning the main of all, your *regeneration* and *acceptation* into the *favour of God*, *encreas* rather than *decreas* in you ; I cannot answer *positively* to any of these *fears* which arise in you ; *God* only who knows your *heart* is able *fully* and *undoubtedly* to certify you, whether you be one of his *servants* and *family* or no ; and whether your soul be *wounded* onely or *quite stripp'd* also of his *graces*.

Yet this I can answer in general, First, that though the *spirit of man* can of it self discern its own *dispositions* and *qualifications* what it hath, and what it hath not, yet whether they be *natural inclinations*, or *spiritual graces*, it cannot *naturally* discern ; the *holy spirit of God* must witness with our *spirit*, concerning the things which are given us of *God*, 1 Cor. 2. 12. so that to know

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know the *graces* of God, which are in us, is from God.

Secondly, from God, as a *gift*, not as a *grace*: and therefore I believe some *servants* of God have many *graces* in them when they have not this *gift* of God to know they have them: the Apostle indeed says, *He who lacketh these graces is blind*, 2 Pet. 1. 9. But he says not, he who is blind, and cannot see them, lacketh them; our *faith*, and all our other *graces*, may lie buried and overwhelmed with the *distrustful* suggestions of the *flesh*, so that we cannot see them: these *graces* may have *private* operations in us, *secret* to us, yet manifest to God; the *spirit* within us may groan, and God hear it, when we do not.

And thirdly, I hope it is *thus* with you at this time, that your former *graces* and *virtues* are in you, though you want this *gift* to discern them: do you not give way too much to these *fears* and *jealousies* of your *flesh*, so that God suffers your *graces* to be overwhelmed with them?

And now in particular, concerning your joy and love of God; I answer, that this *Ephah* of joy (as you term it) which is the constant fruit of love, though it be little in respect of the *Omer*, yet in it self, it is  
great

great and very considerable; who can meditate upon his own *interest* which he hath with *God*, that he is *his God*, and *his Savior*, and not have great joy in himself? though there be no *sensible consolations* at all to accompany this joy, yet there are many *dear servants of God*, who live by it, and are all their lives long supported with *this joy alone*, and a very good evidence they account it, of their *love of God*, and their *faith in him*.

And some there are, who have this joy in them, but *feel it not*; and therupon they complain for want of its *evidence*, to their *love and faith*; and these are of two sorts, such as *will not feel it*, and such as *cannot feel it*. Some there are who are so carried away with *melancholy*, or with *temptations* from their *ghostly enemies*; that they make it a main part of their business to raise *doubts and fears* in themselves; spend their time and wit in framing *objections*, and in starting *jealousies* against themselves, and thus *help forward their own affliction*, and in the mean time what ever arguments of *comfort* they hear, or read, or *feel in themselves*, these they let pass *unregarded*; they are very *quick at objections*, yet very *slow*, and dul at the *solu-*

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tions of them; whereas a far less degree of reason, and wisdom, would answer all their *objections*, and resolve all their *doubts*, if they would bend their study, or their thoughts that way. These I reckon among them, who have the joy of the spirit in them, but feel it not, because they will not. They look only upon the *dark side* of the cloud (which is for the Egyptians) whereas the *light side* it is, which is to be, a guide to the Israelites; they are all for fears and doubts, not at all for comforts to themselves. And though I will not, yet I pray ask your self the question, whether you be not of this form.

If not, yet others there are, who have this joy of the spirit, and cannot feel it; it is in them, & so are other graces too, though they cannot discern it nor them. They have this Ephah of heavenly Manna, yet because they think of the Omer, which others happily have, and they themselves have formerly had, they want it, while they have it; it is their bread and the staff of their spiritual life; yet because it is more dry, and less savoury, then heretofore it was, they account they receive no nourishment from it: and there are many of this form in Christs school; and though fears & doubts  
be



be high in you, yet I hope you are not excluded ; your *graces* are still in you, and as *vigorous* as ever; *no desertion* at all of *grace* in you. For it is ordinary, that the other *desertion* of *comfort* (when it is towards its high) raises up all these *fears* and *doubts* in us, and our *ghostly enemies* take us at this *disadvantage*, and labour, what they can, to *foment* our *fears* in us.

The School-men are wont to say, that all the while our *most blessed Savior Christ* lived upon earth, there was (as it were) a *traverse* drawn between the *beatifical vision*, and the *sensitive faculties* of *Christ's humane soul*: and that when our *Savior* was upon the *Cross*, and cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* then the *traverse* was drawn between the *beatifical vision*, and the *reasonable faculties* of his *humane soul*.

This may be applied to many good *Christians*, and to you also, I hope. While you abounded with heavenly *comforts*, (as you first mentioned ) you were (as it were) with *Christ* in *heaven*, full every where, and replenished all over with joy and *comfort*. Afterward in your first *driness*, the beginning of your first *desertion*, you were (as it were) with *Christ* on earth ; all

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the time of that *desertion of sensible comfort*, there seemed to be a *traverse* drawn between that *superabundant joy*, and the *sensitive faculties* of your soul; and now in this *desertion of spiritual comfort*, in this *depth of barrenness*, you seem to be with *Christ upon the Cross*; and the *traverse* drawn between *those joys* and the *rational faculties* of your soul: Heretofore in your *desertion of sensible consolation*, the lower part of your soul (her *sensitive faculties*) cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* but now even the upper part of your soul, your *rational faculties* also want the sight of *those joys*, and they cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken us!* now your *reasonable soul*, fears it is also *forsaken*, though (I verily hope) it is only a *traverse* drawn between your soul and *those joys*; it began at first with a *cloud darkning*, now it is a *gross shadow eclipsing the comfortable light of the Sun of righteousness*, and of *those graces* which were heretofore *shining* in you: And if so, as there was a *true hypostatical union* between *God and man*, in *Christ*, while he cried out so, on the *Cross*, though the *manhood* had no *vision* of the *Godhead*; so there is still a *mystical union* between *God* and  
your

your soul, though you have no vision nor appearance of it: *substracta est visio, non soluta est unio*; Love still unites you to God, and there is joy, and other necessary graces with it too, though you wanted the comfort of them in your sensitive faculties for a long time, and now also, in your reasonable.

But an Argument you have against all my hopes, and that is, that none of these graces do encrease and grow in you, and therefore they must wither and decay.

Consider I pray, there are other graces to grow in you, beside peace & joy; & though the light of Gods countenance, those sunshine days might ripen them most, yet this present cloudy weather may advantage your growth in humility and mourning, and self-denial; and if there be a growth downward in these, though you perceive no growth upward in the other, yet you are increasing in holiness.

And I must not conceal it from you (in this case you are now) that from hence are my hopes, concerning you, much cherished; I perceive you feel your want of grace, and you complain and mourn for it (which the dead cannot do) and you confess your sins with great humility, loathing

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*your self for them, and you trust in God firmly, that he can and will restore you (and these proceed not, but from life, and vigour too) to your wonted comforts and graces, and upon these grounds I will still hope wel of you.*

Neither can I peremptorily assert that God with-holds this joy and comfort from you, *as a Judge punishing you hereby for some sin or neglect; for sometimes he is pleased to with-hold them as a Lord of the Family; he usually orders it thus for our benefit, for our trial, for the exercise of our patience, and waiting upon him, or for the growth of our humility, or for some other spiritual advantage to us; and other while also God orders it so, for his own wils sake, because he is Lord, and we his People; not judicially, nor aconomically, but arbitrarily, not for punishment, nor benefit directly to us, but for some designe he hath upon us, for his own wils sake; as he dealt with the blind man in the Gospel, who was born blind, not for the punishment of any sin, nor for the exercise of any virtue primarily, but for the Glory of God.*

Now Sir, my prayer for you is, that as the *Apostle*, so you also, with your fears may have great joy, *S. Mat. 28.8.* & then as  
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the *Abundant*, that in the abundance of afflictions you may have abundance of joy,

2 Cor. 8. 8. Sir, I am

Your servant in Christ.

### The ninth Letter.

*The soul now is perplexed with the affrightments of Conscience, and with the terrors of Gods most heavy displeasure.*

Sir,

**M**Y disease encreaseth yet more and more, and now ere I escaped hitherto, yet now it threatneth utter ruin. I have long wanted the light of Gods countenance, but now I espy him frowning against me; the frowns of a Father, such a Father, (who hath been so merciful unto me, and so tender of me formerly) who can bear? That from a friend he should become a stranger; and pass me by instead of visiting me! this was grievous unto me; but now that he should come against me, as an enemy! Job 19. 18. that he who spake peace formerly unto my soul, should for a while be silent! was burthensome to me; but now that he should speak bitter things a-

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*gainst me ! this is a lamentation, and must ever be for a lamentation.*

The same hand which was wont to lead me in the regions of light, and distribute to me abundance of the comforts and joys of heaven, doth now thrust me down into the pit of darkness and shadow of death, where I see the terrors of destruction, and where I feel the gnawings of hell.

My Lord, who came first as an *Almoner* unto me, supplying my necessities with Portions of Comfort and Grace ; and soon after, as a *Treasurer* enriching me with Talents of those Comforts and Graces, he comes now as an *Avenger*, and a *Judge* to receive the forfeiture of his last blessings, and to inflict the sentence of condemnation upon me.

My sins, which were removed from me as far as the East is from the West, are now met together again, and set in order before me ; and they which were as white as snow or wool, are now crimson and scarlet again. Yea, my Saviour and Redeemer who was my surety, and cancelled the bond of hand-writing which was against me, is now become an incensed Creditor against me. Lord, if I could believe in him, he would quit me, and set me free again ; Oh, help

help thou mine unbelief! and though I am weak in faith, make me faithful in weakness.

And yet my hope perisheth also, *Lam. 3. 18* I was wont, when I could not rejoyce in things enjoyed; yet somewhat, to comfort my self in things promised, but now things past, and present, and to come, are all against me, and fear is on every side: Lord be thou stil my hope and my fortress!

Sir, I delight not to expatiate in declaring this my most sad condition; I beseech you to pray for me, for I am a most distressed servant of Christ, and

*Yours in him.*

### The Answer,

Comforteth the soul in her most sad condition, and then it is alleged that all these troubles may be from the Devil.

Sir,

**T**His (if I be not deceived) is the *Paroxysm* and violent height of your former disease; and by your relation it appears that *Job* and *David*, and the Church of God in the *Lamentations* (whose words

*Es*

you



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you use) were in your very condition, and I need not tel you how *dear* they were unto God.

And if it be *God* that is against you, I stil hope that it is for the *trial* of you, or for the *exercise* of you, or for some of those other ends I have named before; and assure your self, if it be his *hand* that is thus *heavy* upon you, it may *bruise*, but it cannot *break* you.

And yet, I rather think, that the *Lord* *afflicts* not, only *suffers* this against you; that it is the *Devil*, who thus *buffets* you; and that these are his fierce *assaults* and *vehement* temptations. And if so, as before you were *conformable* to our blessed *Savior* in *desertion* of comfort, so now you fit up that *conformity* to him, by enduring also this *inflation* of temptations: was not he tempted, to *believe* himself not the *Son* of *God* by *generation*? as you are, to *believe* your self, not his son, by *adoption*? and were not terrors round about him, when he was in that agony, and when he *cried* out, *If it be possible, let this cup passe from me*? as terrors now *compasse* you about.

And if our head, and our fellow-men-  
bers have *suffered* these very *afflictions*, I pray think it not *strange* concerning this *fi-*



trial: especially considering that this conformity to Christs sufferings; wil work out for you, a conformity to him, in glory.

This in general: in particular concerning the horrid representation of your sins before you, as unpardoned: provide (I presume) you do, that your repentance is sincere and unfeined, and therefore the pardon of your sins is irrevocable. The sprinkling of the blood of Christ, hath fully discharged every penitent soul from the guilt of sin; and this gift of the pardon of our sins is a gift of God without repentance.

But this full discharge is not fully apprehended by us; our Consciences cannot so perfectly apprehend the pardon of our sins, as Christ does perform it; as the other faculties of our souls, so our Consciences are sanctified in part only, not wholly; & therefore it is, that when Gods spirit ceaseth to witness with our consciences (as in this height of spiritual desertion it doth) then we fall presently into fears and doubts, and self-condemnings: you want therefore only the attestation of the Spirit of God, with your conscience to embolden and encourage you, firmly to believe the forgiveness of your sins: and if that once come, your desertion is gone, and your disease cured.

Now

Now

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Now, Sir, if your *sins* through *Christ*, be fully pardoned, though this pardon be not fully apprehended, by you, (which our imperfect mortal state wil scarce admit) nay, though it be not at all apprehended, by you (which is the ordinary condition of the servants of God, when they are in *Desertion*) though you walk in this darkness, and have no light, yet put your trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon your God. *Isay 50. 10.*

But even in this, your Faith (you say) fails you; now therefore call to remembrance the days of old; those many mercies, and favors, which God hath bestowed upon you; and by the experiences of his fore-past goodness towards you, strengthen your faith, in his present, and future mercies towards you; Gods mercies past, are warrants for future mercies, and where they have been great heretofore, they are obligations, whereby God binds himself to us, to bestow greater hereafter. You therefore, who have received much heretofore, to you much more shall be given hereafter: *Habenti dabitur.* Oh let this strengthen your faith, and your hope too! But that hope is also out of your sight, and seems to be perished too, and yet our Apostle saith expressly, *Hope that is seen, is not hope, Rom. 8. 24.*

And

And therefore though terrors be round about you, Trust (I pray) in Him, who knows (by his own experience) what it is to be deserted of all comfort, and to be tempted, and most violently assaulted by the Devil; trust in Him, who knows whereof you are made, and when you are able to bear no more; trust in Him, who (if not before) yet then, wil certainly help you, and deliver you: And in the midst of your fears and terrors look up unto Him, who hath promised to look down upon you, who are poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and who tremble at his Word, *Isay 66. 2.* Hide your self under his own wings, for a little moment, and the Indignation wil be overpast: In the mean while I shall pray with that Devout Father, *Oh modicum longum, pie Domine, longum est, & multum valde nimis*: Thou hast promised, Lord, to afflict but for a moment; Alas holy Lord, it hath been a long, very long moment, and too long: It is enough, Lord, it is enough, let this Cup pass: This is the earnest Prayer of Him, who is

your servant in Christ.

The

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### The tenth Letter.

*The Soul refreshed again with the Return of  
her former Consolations.*

Sir,

**I** Return you many thanks, for your Letters of ghostly Direction and Comfort; and for your Prayers for me; and the more heartily, because they prove so behoofful and advantageous to me; The floods of afflictions, and the waves of terror, beat vehemently upon my soul, but the Lord, who sitteth above the water-flood, hath supported me: and I have now seen the wonders of God in the Deep: The wonder of his wisdom, in the variety of his dispensations, of Comfort and Joy; and then of grief and terror; to several men severally: And the great wonder of his Power and Goodness, in upholding my faint Soul against the violence of all these afflictions; and now also in freeing and delivering me from them all.

I carried the Lords lease, and he hath now again given me my hearts desire; He hath brought my feet out of that horrible pit, out of the mire and clay, and set upon an Hill

*Hill and a rock, and there doth he order my goings.*

*I have found Him whom I sought, the love of my Soul, and the joy of mine Heart, my God, and my Lord.*

*Now I enjoy his Presence, I feel his influence; and the light of his Countenance also shines upon me; O Lord I wil praise Thee, for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is soon turned away, and thou now comfortest me. Surely, Sir, my sufferings compared with the Age of my sinfulness, but especially with the eternity of comforts, which I shal enjoy, were but for a moment, a very short, short moment, but the twinkling of an Eye: and now thy joys return: I now behold the face of God, and feel his comforts in the service and worship of him; and therefore every hour seemes five, til the hour of Prayer comes; til by contemplations and meditations I bring my God to my soul: The days for the solemn worship and service of God, I could wish every one of them a Joshua's day; the longest is too short for me; and my wonted hours of Devotion and Meditation are too narrow a confinement for them; And when I am filled with the comforts of God, my heart dilates it self further, by*  
look-

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looking upon the joys of heaven; for if there be such joy, during the seed-time, how infinite is the joy of harvest?

*Praised be the Lord who hath heard my complaint, and answered my prayers, and that with advantage: I asked my former comforts, and he fills me with them, far more then before; he hath been more bountiful to me, then I dared presume to ask. Now I perceive it was so far from being prejudicial to me, that it was most expedient for me, that Christ should go away from me, with these his Consolations; for now He hath sent the Holy Ghost the Comforter down into my soul, with far greater delights, and with more Heavenly joy, then ever heretofore; And if barrenness be so fruitful, and yeilds such a plentiful harvest, oh my soul be thou never hereafter (though thy barrenness should return again) dejected, or troubled at it: Resolve thou rather with Habakkuk, cap. 3. 17. Though there be no Oile of joy, nor wine of comfort, no nor blossom on the Olive tree; or Vine, (no appearance, or hopes of any Oile, or Wine, for refreshment) yet wil I love the Lord, and rejoice in my God; And then press forward (O my soul) towards that of Job, cap. 13. 15.*

*Etiam si*

*Etiam si occideres*, though I be parched  
and withered with *drought*, and consumed  
with *barrenness*, though thou killest me  
(O Lord) with it, yet wil I *love* thee, and  
*trust* in thee.

O, Sir, rejoyce with me, and bless God  
for me, the God of my joy and my comfort  
for ever ; To him be all glory, and honour,  
and thanks, for this his infinite mercy to  
me.

I pray Sir, let not this my health, and  
tranquillity of mind, deprive me of your  
letters ; I am now at good leasure to re-  
ceive what further *directions* you shall  
think fit for me, and thereby you shal stil  
engage

*Your servant in Christ.*

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The

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## 90 *Spiritual Comfort and Grief*

### *The Answer.*

*Sensible Consolations, which proceed some time from the holy Spirit, may proceed also from our own temper, or from the evil spirit: and therefore here is a limitation annexed to the former Directions.*

Sir,

**I** Do truly sympathize with you, and rejoyce for the return; and increase of your joys; Now you see, how good and gracious the Lord is, to all that call upon him, and wait upon him patiently, according to his promise by the Prophet, *Isa. 54. 7. With great mercies wil I visit thee again, though for a small moment, I have forsaken thee.*

Your afflictions were like Job's, in body, in estate, in your friends, and in the barrenness of your spirit, and in the terrors of your soul; and your deliverance is like his also, (in these spiritual things :) as he did, so you have already received double for all your losses; for a cup of affliction, vessels of joy; for disconsolate daies, moneths of great delight and comfort.

Continue I pray, your indifferency, to  
abun-



abundance or want ; Let not the height of your joys puff you up, nor the depth of desolation cast you down ; or any condition dishearten you in the service of God ; Learn to be as wel content, to be with Christ, on Mount Calvary, sorely suffering, as on Mount Tabor, full of joy and comfort ; And as heretofore Christ was your onely hope in your barrenness and sorrow, so let him be your Rock, and your Castle stil ; and rejoyce not so much, in your Consolations, as in him, who is the only true joy, and comfort for ever.

And now Sir, seeing you invite the trouble of my Letters stil to you, I cannot more fitly begin, then with a limitation, to my former Directions.

They were prescribed to you, presuming (not without good grounds) that you are in the state of Regeneration, and fitted they were, onely for you, and for such as you are, the true servants of God ; and therefore no way serviceable to any others : And that this my limitation of them, may appear to be necessary, I shal inform you, that these consolations (whereof I have hitherto written) are sometimes a special gift of God, which he bestows upon some men to invite them,

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them, and *allure* them by the *sweetness* of them to his service, and one, whose heart is still stony, may have them and receive the word with joy, S. Mat. 13. 20. And at other times, God bestows these consolations after regeneration to strengthen them, regenerate and encourage them in his service; and because they want it *most* in their weak beginnings, he then therefore more ordinarily, & more plentifully bestows them.

Secondly, these consolations sometime proceed from our own temper, and from our natural constitution: some men, and many women, have such soft constitutions and tender tempers, that the affections of joy and grief are very soon raised in them, they may soon be dissolved (as it were) into sighs and teares; and they are soon dilated and enlarged with the cheerful expressions of love and joy: whereas men of other tempers cannot so readily express their grief or joy.

And although (as of all other tempers, so) of this softer constitution, some have these consolations given them from God, (as above expressed) yet it is most evident that thousands of men and women abound in outward and sensible consolations, not as a special gift of God, but as naturally

naturally proceeding from their own constitution.

And as the *natural* man may have them, so may the *carnal* man also; for *thirdly*, these *consolations* are *sometime* raised by the Devil; and although the Devil may raise these *consolations* *sometimes* in the true servants of God; yet it is most *likely* and *ordinary*, that he should raise them in the *Wicked* and *profane*, (over whom the Prince of darkness hath most power.)

And these *consolations*, though they spring from several *fountains*, from *heaven* (the *holy spirit*) from *earth*, (our own *temper*) from *Hel*, (the *evil spirit*) yet are they all full of the *same* comforts and *delights* to the *outward* sensitive faculties of the soul; but there is this difference in them, the *first*, are *holy*, and *good*: the *second*, neither *good*, nor *bad*, in themselves, (though easily improvable to good) but *indifferent*: and the *third*, (as their Author is) *evil* and *dangerous*.

And hence it follows that these *consolations* are common to *four* sorts of men; those from *heaven*, to *some*, who are called, and *chosen*; and to *others* also, who are only called, not *chosen*: those from our *natural* constitution, to *meer natural* men:  
and

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and those from *Blas.* to carnal and sensual men; and that one sort onely, of these four, are the true servants of God. And therefore, as there may be true repentance and love of God, and joy in that true servant of God, without these, (as I said before) so now I say, these consolations may be, and are in three sorts of men, without true repentance, and without true love and joy.

And now, having limited my former counsel and directions to the best sort only of men, I shall take my leave; and praying constantly for you, (as you do I hope for me) commend you to the establishing and perfecting grace of God, and rest

*Your servant in our*

*Lord and Master Christ.*

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The

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The eleventh Letter.

The soul aboundeth more and more with Consolations; and is now at leisure to enquire farther into the causes of sensible Consolations.

Sir,  
**I** Still abound with these consolations, and I cannot mistrust them to come from any other fountain, then from heaven; my sensitive faculties have some share in outward consolations, but my rational faculties overflow with them: and therefore I bless God, the Author of these, and of all true comforts: and these still increase in me, the oil of my former joy, was as that, in the widows little cruise; but now I have such store, that (with the other widow) I want vessels to hold it.

Of times I cry out (with the holy man I read of) *sufficit Domine, sufficit*; it is enough Lord, it is enough, I am full of joy, brim-ful, and can hold no more. And sometime, I say with that holy Ephraim (whom I read of) *Recede paulisper Domine, quoniam vas hoc fragile est*: Come not so near, O Lord, with these heavenly ravishments,

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ments, because I want a vessel fit for them; this of my flesh is small and weak, and if thou steppest not back awhile, it wil even now break asunder: I could not conceal this loving kindness of the Lord; Because I must desire your prayers, that according to that of the Psalmist, *Psal. 51. 12.* God would still establisth with this his free, munificent Spirit: but your last letter is it I must speak unto; and I hope it wil not be accounted curiosity, if I desire to be instructed further, concerning those sensible Consolations.

I know by late experience, that a true servant of God may be without these consolations; but that any should have them who is not the servant of God, seems strange unto me; that the rational faculties may have true joy in them, when there is none in the sensitive faculties, this I have been a late example of; they have been in the inward, and not in the outward man; but that the outward man should have them, and not the inward; the flesh, (which is more backward of the two, to any thing that good is) and not the soul and heart (as it must be, if carnall men have them) this is not clear to me.

And again, that men of soft natural tempers

pers should have these *sensible Consolations* of *finer*, and in *greater measure*, then men of contrary *tempers*, this seemes evident enough; (as soft wax receives a deeper impression then hard, because it is more firly disposed for it) but, that these *Consolations* (which are concerning *God*, and in the performance of *holy duties*) should proceed from the naturall temper of any man, that is not so evident.

And *thirdly*, that the *Devil*, who labours all he can to quash these *consolations*, and deprive us of them, that *he should bestow them* upon any man, but especially that he should at any time *befriend the servants of God with them*, this seems very strange to me. I presume (you see) upon your wonted favour, and if your occasions permit you, to write concerning these particulars, it will be a further obligation upon me, who am

*Your friend and servant*

*in Christ our Lord.*

P

The



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### The Answer.

*That sensible consolations are one of the Devils spiritual temptations, whereby he deceiveth many Papists and Protestants.*

Sir,

**I** Am most ready to satisfie you, in your three particulars : it is most true that *Corpus ag gravat animam* (as the wise man speaks) the flesh pulls the soul back from any thing that is good ; and though both of them (in our corrupt state) are backward to every good thing, (as to grieve for sin, and to rejoyce in holy duties to God) yet the flesh and the body is the more backward of the two ; and how that should partake of these Consolations, and the Soul be without them ; that the sensitive faculties should at any time have them, and not the reasonable, in this you desire further satisfaction.

That of the *Apostle* may be applied to this very particular ; *The spirit is edified, and the understanding remains unfruitful, 1 Cor. 14.* the spirit, that is, the sensitive faculties of the spiritual soul, (as *S. Augustine* seemes to take it here) may be  
edi-



edified, though the *understanding*, the *rational faculty* be not. For the *tone*, or the *elocution*, or the *action* and *gesture* of him *who speaketh*, though in an *unknown tongue*, may work upon *them*, not upon *this*; upon the *Sensitive parts*, when it cannot work upon the *Understanding*.

And you may consider farther, that ordinarily, *God* works upon the *soul* by the help of the *body*; by the *eye*, or the *ear*, and so upon the *imagination*, and by *that*, upon the *rational faculties*; and thus the *soul* is stirred up to apprehend, this, or that, and to *hate*, or *love* this, or that, and then to *grief*, or *joy* for this, or that; and therefore there may be some *motions* to *hatred*, and *love*, and to *joy*, and *grief*, and some *beginnings* of them also, in the *outward parts* and *faculties*, which ascend not so high as the *rational faculties*; or ascend not with that power, as to make an impression in the *will* and *understanding*: and so the *body* (which is the more *backward* of the two in affection to good) is *before* the *soul* in order of time, *God* working by the *body* upon the *soul*.

And that this remote motion (which begins in the *outward sensitive faculties*) to

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*Sorrow* for *sin*, and to *joy* in *Gods service*, is from, and by the *grace* of *God*, stirring men and women of tender constitutions up thereunto, may be an answer to your *second particular*. Every motion which tends either at a distance, *remote*, or neere hand, *proxime*, to any thing that good is, is from *God*: he doth not onely give what good is, but *dispose* us to it: of our selves, the best *Temper*s are unable, yea indisposed, to doe Good.

That our *constitutions* are tender and soft, and that we are by them easie to be wrought upon, for the expressions of joy and grief; this is a gift of *God* not common to all: but that such a melting temper is actually moved and wrought upon, to vent those expressions of grief for sin, and those of joy, in the service of *God*, and not on the contrary (as naturally all temperes do) this is the special grace of *God*; this is a motion of the blessed Spirit, stirring up the sensitive faculties, to invite the rational faculties, to mourn for sin, and to the love of vertue.

And now it will not seem strange to you, (seeing outward things do most commonly stir up these sensible Consolations) that the body should be sometime affected with

with them, and not the *Soul*; the *sensitive*, and not the *rational faculties*: For, first these *outward things* are nearer to the *sensitive faculties*, then to the *rational*: and secondly, they have a greater *assimilation* or *likenesse* to the *sensitive*, then to the *rational faculties*; and it is no mervail, that things which are like one to the other, and at a *little distance* one from the other, should have an influence one upon another, when they have no influence at all upon things *unlike* them, at a *greater distance* from them; that, when *outward and sensitive things* were not upon the *spiritual and rational faculties*, (which are *far off* them) they may, notwithstanding, work upon the *sensitive faculties* (which are *next adjoyning* to them.)

And now for your *third*, that these *sensible consolations*, are *sometime* raised by the *Devil*: that this *evil spirit* can work upon the *outward senses*, and upon the *imagination*, in that manner, as to move *teares*, or joy in the *outward man* wil not be denied; & therefore that he wil move us in that manner, if he can wrest those *consolations* to his advantage, this wil be granted also.

All that is questioned then, is, whether the *Devil* can gain any advantage to him-

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*self by our sensible Consolations.*

Indeed his common project is to deprive us of *them*, that he may tempt us, for the want of *these comforts*, to desert the *service of God* as a *sour grape*, and as *unsavoury waters*; and at other times, for his own ends, he is as ready to give them to us. When the Devill cannot prevail against us, by *worldly temptations*, then he casts *spiritual temptations* in our way; and for one of those, he useth these *sensible consolations*.

And this is most notorious in the *Papish Churches* abroad: The *Papish Priests* make it a chief part of their business, both at their *Praiers* and *Sermons*, to raise up in their people, these *outward consolations*; which is not that, I blame in them, but the many *mimical*, & *hystrionical gestures*, and *postures*, which they use for this purpose; which are so *absurd*, and *childish*, that they are as likely to move *scorn*, in the *rational faculties*, (when they are examined by reason and Scripture) as *consolations*, in the *sensitive faculties*.

And yet as *foolish*, and as *vain* as their *gestures* are, they produce this effect of *sensible consolations*, most plentifully in many of the people; the *Devil* (I perswade my self)

self) it is, who furthers these Papists with such sensible consolations, in a most plentiful manner, that by the outward gust, and sweetness of them, he may still hold them in love, with their Errors and Superstitions.

When I see many of them, more affected, and delighted, at their devotions before a Crucifix, or an Image of some Saint, or Angel, then before the most dreadful and merciful Lord of all, without these Images; when I observe, that they have greater plenty of these sensible consolations at an Ave Maria, then at a Pater noster, and more, at a Pater noster (which language many of them understand not) then at Our Father, &c. in their mother tongue; that they more abound with them at their prayers to Saints and Angels, then at their Prayers to God himself; when I hear some of them say, while we were with you in the Protestant Church, though we employed our selves in holy and religious duties, with diligence and earnestness, yet we wanted those comforts and delights in them which we now find; there are no joys like those joys we now taste, since we were reconciled to the Church of Rome, and since we gave up our selves to ob-

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serve the *rites and ceremonies*, and *orders* of that Church; when I see and hear these things, may I then not fully conclude, that these *Consolations* are not from *above*, but from *beneath*; not from *God*, but from the *evill spirit the deceiver* of these *Papists*?

And I wish heartily there were no such *delusions* in our *Protestant Churches*; and that these *delusions* of the *Papists*, had not any influence upon any of *us*, of the *Reformation*.

These *consolations*, which many *Papists* find in their *devotions*, are the *motives* which prevail with some of them (I doubt) to be so *frequent* at their *prayers*; *seven times a day*, ordinary with many of them, (so that we cannot deny (though we blush to say it) that many of the *Popish persuasion*, are more frequent at their *devotions*, then we of *our persuasion* ordinarily are) whereas were their *devotions less affectuous*, and not so fraught with this *outward and sensible sweetness*, it may be feared, that they would stay at a lower number: And yet this *frequency* at their *devotions*, and their *affectuousness* in them, are arguments which have prevailed with some weak (though well affected people)

to

to forsake us, and to become *their* Pro-  
selytes. And therefore if these consolations  
plentifully scattered have bin, and are stil,  
the occasion (at least) of confirming Pa-  
pists in their errors, and of seducing Pro-  
testants from the truth, who wil not grant,  
that the Devil is the Grand Agent in them?

And now for our Protestant Churches,  
I have known divers men, but especially  
women, very much affected at Sermons and  
Praierys, and so much the more, if the Cu-  
rate disfigure himself thereat, by *uncomely*  
looks, or useth *mimical gestures*; if he draw  
out his Praierys, with a *whining tone*, and his  
Sermons, with a *thundering voice*: wheras  
a grave Divine, with a *sober carriage*, and  
meet elocution, moves them not at all.

When I perceive one while *more weep-*  
*ing eys*, and another while, *more chearful*  
*countenances*, at the singing of the *Psalmes*,  
*translated into meeter*, then at the same  
*Psalmes*, (sung too) in other translations,  
*in Prose*; And when I hear some say, that  
they are more edified (that is, *affected with*  
*sensible consolations*) at *extemporary Praierys*  
(especially when they are *toned out*) then  
at *composed Praierys*, and *set-forms*, reve-  
rently pronounced; that at *those*, their  
groans and sighs, beat as thick, as a *Pulse*



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in the height of a *Feaver*, and at the *divine Lyturgie* of the *Church*, and other godly forms of *Praier*, their souls are quite *barren*, and their hearts as hard and dry as *flints*; though in some of these I think those *consolations*, may proceed from their own *natural temper*, or from *custome*, or *pre-engaged affections*, or so; yet I doubt, the *Tempter*, that *Deceiver*, hath somewhat to do in most of them.

It is he (I fear) who is *active* to lul their *affections* *asleep* at our *divine service*, lest it should be *truly profitable* and *advantageous* to them; and as *busy* (I fear) he is, in stirring them up, and *awaking* them, at these *indigested, extemporary Praiers*; and stirs up *false joys*, and *griefs*, with them.

And I am the rather induced to think that the *Devil* is an *Agent* herein, because, I perceive that after a while, most of these *men* and *women* take up an ill conceit of our *Church service*, and then, of all *set Forms*; yea, even some of them mislike that *set form*, of our *most blessed Saviours* *most absolute, and most perfect Praier*. For, seeing their *outward comforts* are raised more at *extemporary Praiers*, and *Sermons*, then at *set Forms* and well-studied *Sermons*,



mons, hereupon they esteem *those* only, and neglect, yea, contemn *these*; and now they begin to think, that there is no devotion in themselves, or in others, unless they shew themselves, to be as tedious in *babbling*, and as vain, as the *Pharisees* were.

And I am further confirmed in it, when I observe, in some of our good brethren, and sisters, very evil consequences from such consolations. For, first, they cry up such Preachers (whether Divines or not) who raise these consolations, in them, for the only soul-saving Preachers in the country; and then to these Sermons, and Prayers, they must travail (though their husbands and masters, press them, to the duties of their calling, at home) and all *loss* they account gain; the pains of travelling some miles pleasure; if these consolations be raised, or nourished, in them; and then farther, all other Divines they contemn, and strive with their Priests, accounting them all, un-edifying, and unprofitable to themselves, and others, without heat, and without light.

And while they have the persons of their own Ministers in admiration, esteeming them such infallible guides, that they can neither deceive, nor be deceived, nor mislead,

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*mislead, nor be misled, mark (I pray) what follows ; (though I cannot write it, without a great deal of grief) In this bonny of sensible consolations there is wrapt up, too often, the gall of error, and sedition, and schism ; and many thousands there are, who swallow them altogether.*

*These their admired Preachers, at these edifying Sermons, secretly instil into them most dangerous opinions ; and after a while, these opinions bring on wicked practises: For, as they embrace error, thinking it truth, and reject truth, thinking it error ; so also they chuse evil, thinking it good, and refuse good thinking it evil ; and from hence I fear it is that now, while they resist the highest powers, and while they persecute their fellow subjects, they are perswaded, they do God good service.*

*And all these, I sum up as evil consequences of that unhappy mistake, of theirs, concerning these sensible consolations ; that those consolations (which they receive by the Ministry of those men, and by the using of those means of extemporary Praier, and the like) are the gift of God, and evident signs of their edification, by them: whereas if they were the gift of God, & they truly edified by them, they would not only abound*

abound in some *virtuous practises* (such as they chuse as most suitable to their own dispositions, as of *Praier, zeal, and devotion, and attending to the ordinances of Gods Word, and Sacraments, strict keeping the Lords day, and of liberality towards them of their own way*) but in all other *virtues* also; in a ready performance of the *whole Wil of God*, in subduing the lusts of *pride, and covetousness, and anger, and the like inordinate affections; in charity and meekness, in humility and patience; and in obedience also to their natural, political, and ecclesiastical Parents; and until I see these principal virtues* (as wel as those others) practised by them, I cannot think (though I beg pardon if I judge amiss) that these *their consolations* are from *heaven, heavenly.*

And although they have no great *delight and joy, in some exercise of holiness; yet their errors and wicked practises* (if once discovered to them) wil fill them full of *torment, and vexation of spirit; their uncharitableness, fierceness and rage, their disobedience and disloyalty to their Prince, their contempt and scorn of the Clergy, especially, of the Reverend Fathers, and Governors of the Church, their Sacrilege, in stripping*

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*stripping the Church of her Patrimony, Ornaments, and Liturgy; their schism, their oppression, and persecution; the grief and sorrow for these, and such like sins of theirs (when God shal please to open their eys) wil overthrow all this their sensible joy and comfort; then wil they perceive that they were not edified, but deluded, and seduced by these sensible consolations.*

And now Sir, if you please to consider what a plentiful *harvest*, here, and abroad, the *Devil* reaps from this seed of *sensible consolations*, you wil not think strange that some of *these* (not to say most) come not from *God*, who sends joy, and truth, and holiness together: Nor that *these consolations* should be a snare of the *Devils* laying; wherby many of (our deare Christian brethren) the *Papists* are kept stil entangled in their sins, and errors; and many also of (our most dear Christian brethren) *Protestants*, are drawn into dangerous opinions, and wicked practises.

The only thing then you are now unsatisfied in, is, that the *Devil* sometime raises such *consolations* in the servants of *God*; the *Devil* is too cunning, and so malicious to let any of his old snares (especially these  
*spiritual*

*(spiritual snares, which are less discernible than others,) lie by un-employed; he still casts them abroad, even among the servants of God.*

When he observes some *servants of God*, to have such store of these *consolations* from *Heaven*, that all his *temptations* to divert them from *Gods service*, or to neglect these *comforts of God*, prevail as little against them, as *new ropes* did against *Sampson*, that the *strength of their consolations* breaks them as a *thread*; and that they are still encouraged by them to go on in the *service and worship of God*, then he is ready to add, to their *aboundance*, and gives them a *fuller measure of consolations*, adding *store of his*, to theirs.

And after a while, when they have taken much *delight and pleasure* in the performance of *holy duties*, then he slyly goes about to persuade them, that they are more *holy*, and more *devout*, than they were, yea than other men are; because they abound more with such *consolations*, than they themselves formerly did, or then other men now do; and then he tempts them to think, that these *Christian duties of Prayers* and the like, whereat they feel these *consolations*, are the *only duties* required at  
their

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their hands ; that their devotion at *Praiers* and *Sermons* is holiness enough, they may rest satisfied that they are accepted with God, (who sends them such abundance of comfort) and need not betake themselves to the practice of any other *holy duties* : Thus if the *Devil* can make these *consolations*, as he made the *Corban* to the *Pharisees* (a plea to excuse them from other duties) he wil plentifully bestow them upon those whom he most labors to win to himself, the true servants of God.

It is reported of one of the *Fathers* (Saint *Hierom* I take it) that while he was at the *holy Table* of God at *publick Praiers* for the *Congregation*, he was on a sodain so sensibly affected, that his teares interrupted his words, and speak he could not for weeping ; and after that pause of silence, he checked the temper, saying, *Etiam hic stas inimice nequam !* Dost thou pursue me even to the horns of the *Altar*, oh thou wicked enemy ? Is not this a place of refuge ? is not this a *Sanctuary* to be secure in, from thy temptations ?

Thus the devout *Fathers* of old reckoned these *consolations*, sometimes, among the temptations of the *Devil*.

Oh that the Lord would discover to  
all

all Papists, and Protestants, this *sie* and subtle snare of the hunter, and help us to break it in sunder.

And now I hope you are fully satisfied. I have writ the more largely of them, that I might hereby give you warning, that all is not gold that glisters; all who appear to us like *Angels of light*, come not from heaven; and by what I have written, it will not be hard, to discern the true from the counterfeit, the consolations of God from those of the Devil.

And for a close of all, though these consolations of yours are (you hope) from the holy spirit (who giveth every good thing plenteously) yet there may be too much delight taken in them; and temptations there may come, to rest in them, to think your self, not only the more happy, but also the more holy, and the more fervent for them; yea, and holy enough with them: But labour I pray to abound (as with comfort) so in every good work, knowing that the more comfort you receive, the more holiness you must return; these consolations are extraordinary heires to virtue and holiness; and the greater your hire is, the more diligently you should labour in the vineyard of God.

And

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And last of all, as your comforts and virtues encrease, so endeavour, that the chief of all virtues, Humility, may abound and encrease in you daily: Have an especial care lest the Serpent bruise the heel, the latter end of your life, by exalting you above measure, for the abundance of your heavenly comforts, and holy virtues; This is the hearty wish, and most fervent prayer of

Your friend and servant,  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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**The twelfth Letter.**

*The pious soul encreasing in holy fear and godliness, is much troubled with doubts, and scruples.*

Sir,

**I**T is now almost a year since I wrote to you last, and though I had no present need of your directions, you might reasonably expect some Letters from me; but the truth is, I am again constrained to write, and your readinesse to answer me formerly, and that so largely, makes me presume (without any farther apology) to desire your directions again. Not in that



that former Case, I have fully resigned up my self to God, and am learning in whatsoever state I am (whether of *comforts*, or of *sorrowfulness*) therewith to be content : but in another Case, concerning doubts, and scruples.

For, Sir, though in matters of faith (I bless God) I waver not, yet in matters of fact, both divine, and civil; spiritual, and temporal, many doubts and scruples (I know not what to call them) arise in me daily. And though God hath given me a most sincere, and unfeined desire to please him, yet in many things I offend, in most things I fear and doubt.

One while, I fear, I indulge too much liberty to others, and too little to my self; another while, that I am too strict to others, and too remiss to my self; and therefore I mete not to others, as I mete to my self. I multiply quares against my self; whether this *duty* was well performed, or not; *this action* lawful, or not; *that word*, or *silence*, seasonable, or not; And for *commerce*, and *traffick* with my neighbours, whether *this*, and *that bargain* were just, not prejudicing my self, nor over-reaching him. And when I would give thanks for any thing well done, (through  
Gods

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Gods grace in me) I think it might have been better done, and that therefore my thanksgiving may be deferred.

*Yesterday* I considered, and determined affirmatively, in *this*, and negatively in *that* matter; and *to day* somewhat is suggested against the *one*, and the *other*: *one day* my conscience excuseth what I the *other day* judged amiss; and *to day* it accuseth for what I *formerly* judged aright: so that I scarce satisfie my self in *one day*, or in *one business* of *ten*.

Now, Sir, if these *motions* be from the Spirit of God in me, I *must* hearken what the Lord God saith, to my soul; at my utmost peril it is, if I receive not, and cherish not those *motions*: and if they be *doubts* I raise of my self, they are not to be neglected, there is danger (my books tel me) in that; but if they be *scruples*, heeding them is dangerous, so there is danger, on every side.

And though I considered not the danger, yet I would not entertain *doubts*, and *scruples* with such humble obedience, as I desire to receive the *motions* of the blessed spirit; nor examine *these* so strictly at the dore of my soul, before I open, as I do those suspicious *doubts* and *scruples*.

And

And therefore I earnestly desire your directions how to discover when these *motions* (in my *mind*) come from the *holy Spirit*, and when they are *doubts*, or *scruples* of mine own: and then what to do in the *case* of *doubts*, and what in the *case* of *scruples*; how to suppress, or satisfy those I have, and how to prevent the like hereafter.

For alas, Sir, much time which would be employed in performance of *holy duties* (in which it is fit I should daily advance, as in *grace* and *virtue*) is spent every day in argument and dispute, with these *doubts* and *scruples*; which make me press for a sodain Answer, whereby you may further oblige

*Your friend and servant*

*in Christ our Lord.*

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The

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## The Answer.

*A tender Conscience most subject to scruples : The difference between a scrupulous Conscience, and a doubtful ; and What to do when doubts, and What when scruples arise : Eleven directions to cure, or prevent a scrupulous Conscience.*

Sir,

**B**Y your last Letters I am comforted more and more, perceiving by them your *progresse* and *proficiency* in *holinesse*, and *purity* : I much commend that *universal care* you have, of *all your ways*, that you so strictly examine every one of your actions before you undertake them, and call them back again,, to your account, afterwards ; and that you set God before you, in all your ways.

Which *care* of yours would not be any whit abated, nor any while discontinued : you must stil *strein* at *gnats*, lest swallowing *them*, make way for *Camels*, or many of *them*, amount to a *Camel* : Esteem not any thing so litle, as to adventure upon it, without consideration, lest that (or your inconsideration in it) prove a sin, though a litle one.

And

And with this *care* and diligent *examination*, you must ever retain those *humble thoughts* you express of your own *performances*: we do not all we ought to do, nor is that we do, alway done so wel, as we might have done it, by the grace of God, that is in us; Or, if we failed in neither of these, but performed all we ought, as wel, as Gods grace did then enable us, yet are we unprofitable servants; and therupon the *Apostle* chargeth us to *pass all the time of our sojourning here in fear*.

This *fear* wil advance our *awe*, and *reverence* to God; it wil *quicken* us in his *service*, and make us more *diligent*; and it wil truly *humble* us, in; and after, all our *performances*.

And yet I must tel you, this *fear* is very prone to be extravagant, and to run out into vain *doubts*, and *scruples*; And our task it is, to keep it, and to moderate it; not to cast it off, nor yet to let it run out: If we keep this *fear* within its bounds and due limits, it wil bring forth those effects of *reverence*, and *diligence*, and *humility*, and only these, and such like, which it *naturally* produceth; but if it break out beyond its bound, this spurious brood of *doubts* and *scruples*, (which are only *accidentally*

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dentally incident unto it) will break in upon us.

And now concerning *your doubts* (though it be very hard to give particular satisfaction in general cases, especially in this of *doubting*, which commonly carries with it much unsatisfiednes) somewhat I shal answer, and in the same method which you propound.

First, how you should know whether these *motions* and *inclinations* of your *mind*, to do *this*, or *that*, or your *doubt* of *this* or *that* done, be from the *holy Spirit of God*, or not?

It will be very reasonable to grant, that some (perhaps many) of those *motions*, which you refer to, in your Letter, are from that *blessed Spirit*; either *checking* you, for *negligence*, and *remisness* in his *service*; or *stirring* you up to *greater care* and *diligence*; and if they come from heaven, receive them you must with all humility, and obey them with all readiness and chearfulness.

But that you may discern, whence the *motions* in you proceed, it will be necessary to examine them; First, whether they be according to the *law* of *right reason* written in our hearts, and to the *divine Law*

Law of God written in *holy Scripture*, and to other *Civil* and *Ecclesiasticall laws*, to which we ow obedience : or whether they be *contrary* to *these*, or any of *these* : or (if neither according nor contrary to any one of those *laws*) whether they be *beside* them all.

If the *motion* within you, stir you up, to do what is commanded by any of *these laws*, or to forbear what is forbidden by any of *them*, this you may conclude to be a *motion* of the *holy Spirit*, and whithersoever it cals you, gird up your loines, and follow it. It is some *virtue* of *piety*, or *justice*, *temperance*, or *obedience*, or such like, or some higher *degree* of *them*, it cals you unto.

But secondly, if it prove *against* these *laws*, contrariant and repugnant to *these*, or to any of *these*, though but to the *law* of *Man* (at such a time, and in such a case, when it is binding) this is a *temptation*; either of the *flesh*, the *world*, or the *Devil*, and then I need not tell you, that you must trample it under your feet. These cannot be *motions* of the *holy Spirit*, who is the same *yesterday*, and *to day*, and *for ever*; changeth not his *truth*, nor his positive *laws*, no more then his *essence*; no,  
G they

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they are not so much as doubts, or scruples.

And then in the third place, if the motion be neither according to, nor against these laws, or any of them expressly, but beside them, of somewhat wherein these laws, give no special command, nor prohibition; in such motions, doubts and scruples wil arise: And how to distinguish which of them are doubts, and which scruples, wil be very material, and not very easie: yet somewhat I shal say, because many good, and tender consciences, are much troubled with them; and the most tender perplexed about them, most.

As there are degrees of stupefaction in evil consciences, some dul and drowsy, others in a dead sleep, feared and cauterized (as the Apostle phraseth it) so also there are degrees of quickness, and tendernefs, in good consciences; some far more vigilant and tender then others, which are good also: yet with this difference, the more stupefaction and dulness, the worse that conscience, though not on the contrary, the more tendernefs, the better.

For there is a certain limit of tendernefs in conscience, which if we exceed, though



though we sin not *in exceeding*, yet we scarcely avoid sin *by exceeding* its limits; They who keep themselves strictly *within* those bounds, are the *safest*; yea, and the *best* (though not the *most tender*) *consciences*: for although a conscience cannot be *too good*, yet it may be *too tender*; I mean not, that a conscience may be *too full of care* to serve and please God, but that it may be *too full of doubts and scruples in caring*; and this I call *too tender*, because its *tendernefs* is very prejudicial in the effects of it.

Therefore, as you ought to bless God because he hath given you a *tender conscience*, so also you ought to crave of him, that it be a *firm*, and a *resolved conscience*; that it exceed not so in *tendernefs*, as to abound with these distracting *doubts and scruples*: And as you must pray for it, so also you must endeavour to procure this *firm and stable conscience*, by *grounding* it upon a *sure foundation*.

Now the *foundation* wherupon your conscience ought to *build*, is a *perswasion* that *this, or that, you are about to do, is lawful, and just*; and according to the several degrees of *Perswasion*, there are several degrees of *firmness and stability* of

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conscience, in severall men; yea, in one and the same man, concerning several actions.

If your *perswasion* be grounded upon *faith* in the *Word* of *God*, that you are *perswaded* to doe *this*, or *that*, because the *Word* of *God* directs you in it, this is a *sure rule*, and your *perswasion* I suppose most *ful*, and most *firme*. Or if your *perswasion* be grounded upon *knowledge*; that is, you are *perswaded* to do *this*, and to forbear *that*, because you *know* that the letter and meaning of the *law* directs you, both to *this*, and *that*, this is also a *sure rule*, and your *perswasion* may be *ful* and *firm*: And when you do any thing upon *ful* *perswasion*, by the dictate of *faith* in the *Word* of *God*, or by the dictate of *knowledge* in the binding *Laws* of the *Church* or *Kingdome*, you build upon a *rock*, and the floods of doubts, and waves of scruples (though they beat vehemently) should not shake you. But commonly our *perswasion* is grounded upon *opinion* only; I am of *opinion*, that *this* is *lawful* and *just*; that *this* is according to the *rule*, which the *Scripture* gives; or that *this* is the meaning of such a *Law*, and ther-upon I am *perswaded* to do *this*. As when the

the *Scripture* directs me in generall, that all be done decently, and in order, my *opinion* tels me, that this is decent, and orderly; that *uncomely* and disorderly, and thereupon I do that, and forbear this.

And seeing our *perswasion* in every particular action cannot be grounded upon *faith* or *knowledg*, because the *Word* of God, and *binding laws*, are too general, for particular *directions* in every case, therefore, where they uphold not our *perswasion*, *opinion* must.

And, Sir, though your *perswasion* be sometimes grounded only upon an *opinion*, that you do according to the general *directions* in the *Word* of God, or in the *Law*, even then your *perswasion* may be *ful*, and your *conscience* *firm*. Nor such a *Plerophory*, indeed of *perswasion*, as when *faith* or *knowledg* upheld it; yet such a *fulnes*s your *opinion* will bring, as is able to make your *conscience* *firm* and *stable*.

For where *faith* or *knowledge* guide us, there is such a certainty, that there is no *fear* at all of the *contrary*; what we *believe*, and *know*, cannot be *otherwise*, then *sa*:. But where we have only *opinion* for

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our guide, there is alway, *Formido contrarii*, a secret fear that the contrary way may be the right, and not this.

Yet such a firmnesse there is alway in this conscience which is guided by opinion only, as truly to distinguish it from a doubtfull conscience, and to advance it, above that : For a doubtful conscience wavers between this, and that, halts (as the Prophet calls it) between one and another, gives no judgement, nor decision, that this, or that is to be done ; if once it determines ( though but upon opinion ) this is no longer a doubting Conscience.

Indeed, if the determination be faint and weak, this may go for an inclination to this, rather then to that, it is no absolute opinion of it ; and so it is not yet beyond the bounds of doubting : but as soon as the opinion is fixed, the determination peremptory (as sentences and decisions of our judgment, and opinion use to be) then doubting is shut out of doores ; And as this is a firm Conscience, so also (if the opinion be not erroneous) it is a good and a just Conscience.

Thus if you once settle, and fix your opinion, doubting is gone, the indeterminate  
Wavering

*wavering of this, cannot consist with the determination, and resolution of that.*

But then for *scruples*, they are not so easily excluded; they will creep upon us concerning those actions which are grounded upon *faith*, and *knowledge*, and therefore you cannot hope that those actions, which are grounded upon *opinion* only, should be free from them.

For *scruples* are said to be, only *probable arguments against our actions*: now seeing whatsoever our actions are grounded upon (whether upon *faith*, or *knowledge*, or *opinion*) there may be arguments suggested (at least as *probable*) against them, *scruples* therefore may consist with the most firm *Conscience*.

And upon this, the difference will be plain between *doubts* and *scruples*: *Doubts* do suspend the judgment; no decision, on this or that side where doubting is; but *scruples* may consist with that judgment which *opinion* gives; yea, with that, which *faith*, or *knowledge*, give, as absolute, and as firm, as they are: *Scruples* may come in, whatsoever we do, and trouble us, and shake us, and their design is to weaken, and dishearten us too.

Examine then by this, whether yours

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be *doubts* or *scruples*: If that *sentence* which your *faith*, or *knowledg*, or *opinion* gave, concerning *this*, or *that*, to be *done*, or left *undone*, stands stil *firm*, as when you gave it *first*, *unreversed*, it is not a *doubt*, which ariseth in you, concerning *this*, or *that*; but a *scruple* only: a *doubt* *reverses* the *sentence*, already given, and *suspends* from giving any other; this is only an *argument*, which, though it hath not reason enough, to prevail with you, for *reversing* the *sentence* and *judgment*, which directed you, in *this* or *that* action, yet it seems to have *probability* enough, to trouble, and disquiet you, about it.

And when you have distinguished, whether these *motions* which arise in you, be *doubts*, or *scruples*, you must do accordingly, which brings on the answer to the particular your Letter mentions.

And it wil be material for you to observe what you imply in your Letter, That these *motions* arise in you, one while upon *deliberation* of *what is to be done*; and another while, upon *re-examination* of *that which hath been done*.

If they arise, *before* you do *this*, or *that*, the question then is, within your self, *whether*

*ther you ought to doe this, or that; or whether you are bound to doe it, thus, or thus: and if these motions be then so impetuous upon you, as to cause you truly to doubt, whether that you are about be lawful, or unlawful, in that case you have an expresse direction from the Apostle, Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin: that is, whatsoever we doe without a full persuasion, and opinion of the lawfulness of it, is sin.*

When our Conscience doubteth, and suspendeth to judge, or determine this, or that, we must suspend from doing this, or that, which it doubts of; He, who doth what He himself doth not determine, to be right and fit, but wavers, and doubts, whether it be so, or no, sinneth.

In which case of doubting of these two, doing, or not doing; it is as likely to do what is right, as what is not; there is one way to chuse the good, and but one way to chuse the evil; and yet I say not only, he may sin by taking the left hand, but he does sin, though he lights upon the right: for though he doth that which is right, he doth it not rightly; he ventured blindfold upon it, without any guide of faith, knowledg, or opinion, doubtfully.

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To prevent this certain *sinning*, by doing *doubtingly*, you must resolve your self fully of the *lawfulness* of all your *actions* before you undertake them, that you *condemn not your self*, in that, which you allow your self, to do. Be fully *perswaded* in your own mind, that you may do this, or that, *lawfully*, and then do it.

But then if these *motions* which arise in you, are found to be only *scruples*; you are fully *perswaded* in your own mind, that you ought to do *this*, or *that*, and yet objections crowd into your mind, to the contrary; in that case I must joyn with your *full perswasion*, and put you forward to do that, which it directs to do, and that with *cheerfulness*, and speed: if you defer til these *scruples* be allayed, others may arise, and then you must stay to satisfy them also, and so it is too likely that you wil wholly neglect that *duty*; for *scruples* wil encrease and multiply, so much the more, if they be heeded, and cherished.

Thus if your *motions* be upon *deliberation* what is to be done: but now if they be upon *re-examination*, what hath bin done, and the question is, whether this, or that, were well done? in this case, you must recall to mind, upon what grounds  
you



you did *this*, or *that*; whether *faith*, *knowledge*, or *opinion* directed you so to do? And of these, *opinion* is most likely to deceive you; yea, *that only* can mislead you (for that is not *faith*, nor *knowledge* neither (but an *opinion* only that it is *faith*, or *knowledge*) which can direct you to do any thing, that is amiss.) And if it appear to you now, that the *opinion* which directed you then, was not true; you were fully persuaded in your mind; but erroneously persuaded; then your business will be, to cast off that error, to repent of it, and to repent also of that action into which your blind guide misled you: And if the action were of that nature, as *slander* and *injustice* against our neighbour, you are bound also to repair your brother, in whatsoever he was damaged by it.

Thus you know many, who were once of that opinion (wherin some Protestants, and most Papists, agree) that it is lawful to propagate the true Religion, by force and war, (and thereupon engaged themselves in spoiling and robbing, and slaying the dissentient Party) who being now of another opinion, that to reform Religion by the sword, is an offering violence to  
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*the tender consciences of many, and a doing evil, that good may come of it, spend their time wholly in lamenting their former error and sin; and their estates, in repairing such men, whom in that their error, they had spoiled and injured.*

Though the *action* was done upon a full *perswasion* of the *lawfulness* of it, yet that *perswasion* appearing now *eroneous*, such *repentance*, and *restitution*, they think required of them.

And in other men, where these *motions* produce not a contrary *Opinion*, yet *Doubts* they may produce; and thus it may be with you: when you undertook *this*, or *that action*, you were fully *perswaded* in your *minde* of the *lawfulness* of it; but now *doubts* arise in you concerning it; and you cannot *determine* whether you did *lawfully*, or *unlawfully* in it; in this case, your labour will be to resolve your self *de novo*, to study and consult of the *lawfulness* of that *action*, as if you were now again to undertake it; and when your *doubt* is *resolved* into an *opinion*, you need little direction in that case: If it be the same *opinion* again *resumed*, which guided you to that *action*, then you may bless God, and plead your *innocency*

cy in that *action*, against all *Objectors*, and *objections*: If you are convinced by *reason*, and *argument*, to *alter* your *opinion*, then the former *direction* (of repentance and restitution) is to you in this case also.

And thus I meet with some, in every street, who took *Oathes*, and *Covenants*, upon the *ful persuasion* of the *lawfulness* of them, now so much *doubting* whether they did well, or ill therein, that they *consult* their *Bookes*, and their *spiritual Directors* afresh, to be resolved concerning them: and when they *alter* their *opinions* (though their *Oath* cannot be *un-sworn*, nor the *actions*, done in pursuance of it, *un-done*) yet I hope to see them so truly *penitent*, that these *sins* will not be laid to their charge.

And thirdly, if these *motions* which arise in your *mind*, upon re-examination of what you have done, be *scruples* only; *Arguments* (or *objections* rather) suggested as probable, which do no way divert you from your *opinion* which guided you in this, or that *Action*; nor yet bring you into a true *doubt*, whether your *action* were *lawful* or not; in this Case, the more you neglect these *scrupulous motions*, the better and the sooner you will possess your  
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your soul in quietnesse and peace.

And now Sir, that you may be the better able to eject those *scruples* you have already, and to prevent others also hereafter, (which is the third thing you desire resolution in) you shal doe wel; First, truly to inform your self of the *cause*, or *original*, whence *they* proceed.

In some, *scruples* proceed from the *temper* of the *body*: a *melancholick constitution*, which is most subject to *fears* and *sadnesse*, if it hath a *tender Conscience* therewith, is commonly *ful* of these *scruples*, also: In others they proceed from a *sceptical wit*, which is alway enquiring, feldom satisfied; if that *temper* and this *Wit* meet together, with a *tender Conscience*, *scruples* will abound: In others, they may be from the *Devil*; he (by *indisposing our bodies*, or *raising fancies*, or otherwise more immediately, by himself, without any advantage taken from us) cast these *scruples* into our minds. Where I hear of *Motions* to be *precise* and *strict* in *one Duty*, if I see inclinations to *remissness* and *neglect*, in another *Duty*, as necessary as that former. I suspect these *scruples* to be from the *Devil*; It is the *holy Spirit* which moves us to *universal*  
*strict.*

*strictness* in all Duties, the evil spirit may sometime move to *Partial strictness*, in one or two Duties; It is an old policy of his, to make us uneven in our obedience, to *strein* at one gnat, and not at another.

And from what causes soever these *scruples* proceed, they commonly come like Angels of light, with goodly shews, and holy language, moving to more exact obedience (as is pretended) and to more universal, and more punctual performances. And this they usually urge so eagerly, that it is hard to distinguish them from those motions of the *holy Spirit*, which I spake of even now: your examination of them therefore must be with some diligence: and if after that, you find those motions and fervors in your mind, not to be from the *holy Spirit*, but *scruples* proceeding from one of these fountains, or from such like.

Then secondly, you may consider the many inconveniencies which they may bring upon you; how they weaken your minde, make it *unstable*, as water; how they disturb you in many performances, divert you from some; how inconsistent they are with that serenity of

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conscience, and *cheerfulness* of mind, which otherwise you might enjoy; how they *darken* your *understanding*, and make your *wit* and *affections* also *dull* and *heavy* in *holy duties*, and your whole life *uncomfortable*; how they *lead* into *error* and *superstition* oft-times, and may at length bring you into *fear* and *perplexity*; yea (if the Devil can have his wil) even into *desperation* it self: when you reckon up these, and what other *inconveniences* you find, or can fear from these *scruples*, you wil not delay to observe what you think fittest for your *cure*, or *ease*.

Therefore, thirdly, some directions I shal name: and I must begin with the chief; *Humble* and *feruent* praier to God, from whom alone you can receive comfort and quiet: then *ghostly advice* and direction from friends, praying God to direct your director, and resolving (if possible) to rest satisfied in what he directs. Thirdly, *divert*, I pray, your self from these *scruples* (as much as you can) cast off the thoughts of them, foment them not by heeding them, nor by *conversing frequently*, with *scrupulous persons*; yea, drive them away by *crossing*  
*scruples*

*scruples*, that is, propounding your *more probable Arguments* against those *less probable*.

Or a fourth way may be, by adhering to those opinions, which are *most probable*, *most favorable*, and *most common*, and by ordering our practises after them; *rigid*, and *singular opinions* open a wide door for *scruples* to enter in.

A fifth: Consider, I pray, in all your perplexities, the wonderful *moderation* of *Christs commands*; that he hath taken away the *rigor* of the *law*, and requires no more of us, then he enables us to perform: He expects not, from us, the performance of all things, in that manner, as they may be done, by our *utmost possible diligence* and care, but accepts them, at his throne of grace, if they be performed by our *utmost moral diligence*, and care: according to the ordinary course of humane diligence in other matters: therefore we ought not to be disquieted, that we do not our *utmost possible diligence*, to observe his commands, for by such *scruples* we shall be slackened and hindred in doing our *utmost moral diligence*.

A sixth: To *trust* in *Gods mercies* through Christ, that he wil give grace to enable

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enable us to what he requires, and pardon what is amiss. He knows whereof we are made, how frail and weak we are, and will have compassion of our infirmities.

Seventhly : to be truly *sensible* of our own *natural corruption*, that of our selves we are not able to think a good thought, it must be the *grace* of God which enables us : and by that *grace* we are not enabled (in this our frail condition) to that *exact performance* which the rigor of the law requires ; only to that *sincere* and *upright obedience*, which God (through Christ) will be pleased to accept. And though I hope no *Scruples* arise in you presuming of your *naturall strength*, yet some may arise, not weighing the *imperfection* of our *mortal condition*, even in our *regenerate state* : And if so, it will be a good means towards the cure, that you learn to discern between your *personal weaknesses*, and those of our *mortal condition*, (which are common to all, while they are in the flesh) and charge your self as culpable, and *sinful*, only in those *particular defects*, not in these *general ones* : It is an *unhappinesse* (not to be thought on without grief of heart) that we can-

not



not now live (as in Paradise) exactly performing the wil of God always, in all things, with all our faculties ; but I hope (if it be lamented) it wil not amount to a sin at Christs throne of grace.

An eighth : rightly to understand that general rule of the Casuists, *In dubiis tutior pars eligenda*, in doubtful matters to chuse the safest side ; First, it must be in doubtful matters, where there is truly a doubt, not in scrupulous matters : Secondly, we are not alway bound to chuse the safest, provided that what we chuse is safe : which is the safest wil be hard to resolve in some cases, and if you stay for that resolution, scruples wil flow in. You doe not sin, if you chuse that which is safe ; and that is safe which (as I said before) is grounded upon faith, knowledge, or opinion, so you be not deceived in them.

A ninth may be, by qualifying that strict opinion, *that we are alway bound to do that which is best* ; it is most true we are to aim at the fairest, and best ; and to press towards it ; but if then we miss it, and come short of it, we sin not ; if that which you do be good, though it might have been better, lament the imperfection

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perfection you should, and yet praise God for the goodness of it.

A tenth may be, by considering that affirmative precepts lay not so strict an obligation upon us, as negative precepts do : Negative Precepts obligant ad semper, (as Casuists speak) affirmative not : for negative precepts are not broken, but by committing some act ; affirmative by omitting only ; and our obligation is not so strict against omitting, as it is against committing. A case may happen, wherein it may be lawful to omit the affirmative (as keeping the holy Festivals, and Fasts of the Church, for God wil have mercy, and not sacrifice) though no case can possibly happen, wherein I may lawfully commit that which is against the negative ; I cannot be excused, if I take Gods name in vaine, by Oaths and Covenants, though mercifulness towards my self, wife, and children, (in saving my estate thereby) plead for me : and so for other Negative precepts : therefore if the checks you hear within your self be concerning Affirmatives, they may be the more suspected for scruples, and sooner answered, then if they be concerning Negatives.

Lastly, seeing these scruples come to  
you

you with such *good words*, and such *holy pretences*, the best way to defeat them of their mischievous purposes is, to take them at those their *good words*, and go no further with them; Let those words of *theirs* stir you up to a more *universal* and a more *exact care*, in the *service of God*; thus you may make even these *deceitful Gibeonites* serviceable to the use of Gods *Tabernacle*.

Thus, because the danger from these *scruples* may be great, therefore the *directions* to suppress and prevent, or to defeat them, are many; and yet more you may suggest to your self, or read in *bookes of Devotion*, and *Casuits*: By some of these, or such like, you may (I doubt not) obtain *ease* from your *perplexities*; and *peace* and *comfort* in your *holy* and *just performances*. And (as in the diseases of your body, so in this of your soul) the sooner you go about the cure, the better; it is easiest at first; the more these *scruples* gain upon you, the more unsatisfiable they are, and there wil be the greater difficulty to cast them out.

And here I must add a caution, or two, First, that you take very great heed, that you eject not the *motions* of the *blessed Spirit*,

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*Spirit*, as if they were *Scruples*; that you learn to distinguish between *Those*, and *These*: and whensoever *those* knock at the dore of your heart, open to them; whensoever they call, or whisper to you, say, *Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth.*

Secondly, that you beware of the common error of the world, which is, to account all strict rules of *Justice*, or *Temperance*, *Obedience* to *Parents*; yea, and the *punctual, precise service of God*, (though they be most absolutely necessary) *Scruples* and *Niceties*: and deride the practisers of such rules, as *scrupulous persons*.

And now at last in the close of your Letter, you seeme to grutch all time, which is not spent by you in *holy Duties* and *Prayer*, and you think fit to advance in them, as in other *graces* and *virtues*: *Love*, I see, is *liberal*, and where you love much, you will still be giving more.

And the more you encrease in *Love*, the lesse will that seem to be which you bestow; that which is *much* now, wil seem *less* hereafter: And if you think fit your *holy Duties* of *Prayer* and *Meditation* should

should advance still, in proportion to your *Love*; Remember withall, that of *Jacob* (the mighty man of *Prayer*) to drive no faster, then the children and cattel (your weak body, *fumentum animæ*, as the Fathers call it) are able to endure.

Now my *Prayer* shall be, That all these shakings by doubts and scruples may tend to root you more deep, and more firme in the love of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, to whose grace and mercy I commend you, and rest

*Your servant in Christ Jesus.*

23 Decemb. 1646.

I. D.

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T H E E N D.

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A  
LETTER  
CONTAINING  
*Many remarkable passages*  
In the most holy  
LIFE & DEATH  
OF THE LATE LADY,  
*LETICE,*  
Vi-Countess FALKLAND.

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WRITTEN  
To the Lady *Morison* at great *Ten*  
in Oxford-shire.

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The second Edition.

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'LONDON,  
Printed for RICH: ROYSTON.  
M.DC.XL.IX.

LETTER

CONTAINING

Many remarkable passages

in the most holy

LIFE & DEATH

OF THE LATE LADY

ELIZABETH

VI Countess of SALISBURY

WRITTEN

by the Lady Mary Anne Countess of Salisbury

The second Edition

LONDON

Printed for R. and J. DODD

MDCCXIX





A

# LETTER,

*Containing many remarkable passages  
in the most holy Life and Death of  
the late Lady LETICIA  
Vi-Countesse Falkland.*

*Madame,*



**T**is the desire of some Honourable Personages to have an exact account of the Death of your most dear Daughter, the Lady FALKLAND; they being privy to much piety in her life, expect (as well they may) somewhat most remarkable in her sickness and death.

And for the comfort of you, and for the satisfaction of them, I have gathered together some scattered particulars of her life, sickness, and death, and have sent them unto you.

That the most precious perfume of her  
H 2 name,

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*name, being powred out (like S. Mary Magdalens box of Spiknard) may fil your, and their houses.*

And though this *relation* of so many eminent *virtues* in *her*, would not (perhaps) have appeared so handsome from *your* own *pen* (because so deep a share of the praise belongs to you) yet you need not blush at the delivering of it; it may consist with *your modesty*, to be a *witnesse* of the truth of these particulars; though not to be a *Publisher* of them.

And if the *memory* of that most holy *Lady*, continue *precious* amongst us; and her holy *example* efficacious with us; and God (who *sanctified* her here, and now *glorifies* her in heaven) be magnified and honored for his *mercies* and *graces*, I have all I aim at.

I shal note somewhat remarkable in the very beginning of her *Christian race*; more, in her *progress*, and *proficiency* in it; and then come to the last *stages*, when the *crown*, at the end of the *race*, was (as it were) within her *sight* and *view*.

This *elect Lady* set out early in the ways of God, in the dawn or morning of her Age: There was care taken while she was young, that she should be brought up in the

the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; She came not from her Nurses arms, without some knowledg of the principles of Christian religion.

While she was very young, her obedience to her Parents (which she extended also to her Aunt., who had some charge over her, in her Fathers house) was very exact ; and as she began, so she continued in this gracious, and awful temper of duty, and observance : I have heard you say (Madame) that you cannot remember any one particular, wherein at any time, she disobeyed her Father, or you.

That her time might not be mis-spent, nor her employments tedious to her, the several hours of the day had variety of employments assigned to them ; and the intermixing of *prayer, reading, writing, working, and walking*, brought a pleasure to each of *them*, in *their* courses ; so that the day was carried about faster, then she would, and she begins in this her youth, to abridge her self of her sleep, and was oft-times at a book in her Closet, when she was thought to be in bed.

You remember wel, I presume, the *Purse* her young fingers wrought for her own *alms*, and how importunately she

would beg your single mony to *fil* it; and as greedy she was of *emptying* it too; the *poor* seldome went from the house without the *alms* of the young *daughter*, as well as of the *Parents*.

And how constant she was then, at her private *Praiers*, I ghesse, by what I have heard from the keeper of *your* house; when strangers were in *her* own room where *she* ordinarily had her retirements, He was called to give *her* the key of some other chamber for that purpose, at *her* hour of *Praier*; *she* would procure a new *Oratory*, rather then omit, or defer that *duty*.

And how powerful with God, the *lift-  
ing up* of her pure hands every where, in this her innocent *Childhood* was, soon appeared. For while her piety and *heli-  
ness* was in this bud, a violent attempt there was made to blast it. About the *thirteenth* year of her Age, there was a storm of temptation raised in *her*, and some arguments the *tempter* had suggested to drive *her* to despair of Gods mercy towards *her*: And this I note the rather, because it is not ordinary at such years, to have attained to that growth, as to be thought fit for those encounters:

But

But God upheld this young twig, against such a storme, which hath torn up many a fair tree: For after some anguish of spirit, and patience in the combate, and earnest prayers, Gods grace was sufficient for her: and surely it was not the strength of her hands, at this Age, but the pureness of them, which prevailed for her.

Some there are, whom God leads from the spirituall Egypt, to Canaan, not by this way of the Philistines, lest they should repent when they see war, and turn back again into Egypt, *Exod. 13. 17.* But her (it seems) God trained up in this military course; and from her youth exercised her in it, that she might be expert at it.

After this conquest, her soul enjoyed much peace and tranquility, and she went on most cheerfully in holy duties, and tasted much comfort, and delight in them: And her heart was ever and anon so full, that out of the abundance of it, she would say, *Oh what an incomparable sweetness there is in the musick upon Davids Harp; oh, what heavenly joy there is in those Psalms, and in prayers, and praises to God; how amiable are the courts of Gods house; how welcome the days of his solemn worship!*

And now, nothing can hinder her from

those *holy Assemblies*; Every *Lords day* constantly, forenoon, and afternoon, *she* would be with the earliest at them: Some while (when *she* wanted a convenience of riding) *she* walked cheerfully three or four miles a day, as *young*, and as *weak*, as *she* was, to them: And at night *she* accounted the joys, and the refreshments, which *her* soul had been partaker of, a sufficient recompence, for the extream weariness of *her body*.

And within a short while, by reading good Authors, and by frequent converse with learned men, *she* improves (by Gods help) *her* natural talents of *understanding*, and *reason*, to a great degree of *wisdom* and *knowledg*.

And now these riches, of *her piety*, *wisdom*, *quickness of wit*, *discretion*, *judgment*, *sobriety*, and *gravity of behavior*, being once perceived by Sir *Lucius Cary*, seemed Portion enough to *him*: These were *they*, he prized above worldly Inheritances, and those other fading accessions, which most men court.

And *she* being married to *him*, riches & honour, and all other worldly prosperity, flow in upon *her*, and consequently to proceed in *holinesse* and *godliness* grows  
an

an harder task, then before it seemed to be: it being much more difficult *when riches and honor thus increase, then, not to set her heart upon them.*

Yet God enabled *her* by his grace for this also; for when possession was given *her* of *stately Palaces, pleasantly seated, and most curiously and fully furnished, and of revenues and royalties answerable, though your Ladyship hath heard her acknowledge Gods great goodness towards her, for these temporal preferments, yet neither you, nor any of her friends, could perceive her heart, any whit exalted, with joy for them.*

*They were of the Babylonians retinue, who when they had seen Hezekiahs riches and treasures, set their hearts upon them, Isai. 39. this true Israelite reserved her affections, for those riches which never fade, and for those dwellings, which are above, where the City is of pure gold, and the walls garnished with pretious stones.*

This confluence of all worldly felicities and contentments, did so litle affect *her*, that there were some seemed displeased at it; & then *she* would attribute much of it, to a *melancholick disease*, which was

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then upon *her*; And though I deny not, but that some worldly delights might fall by the hand of her melancholy, yet doubtlesse where the disease flew its hundreds, grace flew its ten thousands.

And in this condition some yeares passed, during which time, *she* was most constant at Prayers, and Sermons, and frequently received the blessed Sacrament; and although now, and then, *she* felt not her wonted spirituall Comforts, but in stead of them had some anguish, and bitterness of spirit, yet by the advise of good Divines, and by her ordinary help of Prayer, *she* recovered soon her peace and joy.

Thus in severall conditions of youth, and ripe yeares of virginity, and marriage; and amongst contrary temptations, of adversity, and prosperity; affliction, and comfort, *she* continues that course of holy Life, which *she* had begun; a great proficiency, and a far progresse this: yet I crave leave to reckon it all into her beginning, for this was but slow in respect of that great agility, and quick speed, *she* attained unto, in the other part of her spiritual race.

Her proficiency and progress I shal account



count from that time; when *her* prosperity began to abate; when *Her* dear Lord, and most beloved Husband, that he might be like Zebulon, (a student helping the Lord against the mighty, *Judg.* 5. 14.) went from his Library to the Camp; from his Book and Pen, to his Sword and Spear; and the consequent of that, an inevitable necessity, that *she* must now be divorced from him, for a while, whom *she* loved more then all the things of this world; this was a sad beginning: but that totall divorce, which, soon after, death made between him and her; that he should be taken away by an untimely death, and by a violent death too, this, this was a most fore affliction to her; the same sword which killed him, pierced her heart also.

And this heavy affliction which God sent upon her, *she* interpreted for a loud call from heaven, to a further proficiency in piety and virtue.

And yet *she* fears it may be a punishment also upon her, for some sin, or other, and therefore strictly examines her self, and ransacks every corner of her heart, to find out wherein *she* had provoked God to lay this great affliction on her; and to make sure, *she* renews her repentance for all

all *her* transgressions; and *her* godly sorrow for *her* sins past, is as fresh, as if it had bin for the sins of yesterday.

And now *she* addresses *her* self to a Divine of great eminency for piety, and learning; and from *him* *she* takes directions for a more strict course of life in this *her* Widowhood, then formerly; now *she* forgetting quite what was behind, presses forward to what was before, and, as if *she* had done nothing yet, *she* begins anew.

And though the greatest and chiefest part of *her* Christian work, was locked up close within *her* self, and some of it very studiously, and industriously concealed by *her* (that *she* might be sure no degree of vaine glory, should creep upon *her* with it) yet much of it appeared, by the effects, and is now forced to come abroad before us.

*Her* first and grand employment was, to read and understand, and then (to the utmost of *her* strength) to practise our most blessed Saviors Sermon upon the Mount, in the fifth, sixth, and seventh Chapters of S. Matthew's Gospel; and having read over a most compleat (though compendious Comment) upon that Sermon,

*she*

she set forthwith, upon the work of *practising* it, and began with those *virtues*, to which the *beatitudes* are annexed.

And her *mercifulnes* was none of those *virtues*, which she could at all conceal from us; much of her *estate* (we saw) given yearly to those of her *Kindred*, which were capable of *Charity* from her: And some of her *neer neighbours*, who were very *old*, and not able to work; or very *young*, and not fit for work, were *wholy maintained* by her: To other poor children she contributed much, both for their *spiritual*, & their *temporal* wel-being; by erecting a *Schole* for them, where they were to be taught both to *read*, and to *work*: much care she took, that no man, or woman, or child should want *employment*; that their own hands might bring them in a *competent subsistence*; and accounted that the best *contrivement* of her *estate*, which set most poor people on work; for if it were to their profit, she little regarded her own *detriment* in it.

So that her *principal care* herein, was to keep them from *Idleness* (that root of all *sin and wickedness*) for by another *contrivement* of her *estate*, she might have received more profit, and therby have  
bin

been better able, to relieve them, though by this only, *she* was able to set them on work.

A most eminent piece of *mercifulnesse* this, where *corporall* and *spiritual* mercy went together, and *wisdome* guided both.

And for the *poor* at home, and for *strangers* at the dore, *she* was very charitable in feeding the hungry, and refreshing the faint and weak; and for clothing the naked, in some extremities you should see this *Lady* her self goe up and down the house, and beg garments from her Servants backs, (whom *she* requited soon after with new) that the *poor* might not go naked, or cold from her dore: So that *she* was not only a liberal *Almoner* to the *poor*, but also an earnest *Solicitor* for them: And when it was objected, that many idle and wicked people, were by this course of *charity*, relieved at her house, her answer was; *I know not their hearts, and in their outward carriage and speech, they all appear to me good and virtuous; and I had rather relieve five unworthy Vagrants, then that one member of Christ should goe empty away; And for harboring strangers, the many inconveniencies, ordinarily ensuing upon it, could*  
not

not deter her from it ; sometimes for some weeks together, they were entertained by her.

And since her death, I hear of plentiful relief, here, at London, and at Oxford, sent privately to Prisons, and needy persons, with a strict charge that it should not be known from whence it came ; She would not have her left hand know, what her right hand gave.

And this her mercifulness could not be bounded within the limits of friends, it extended it self to her enemies too : when there were some store of them taken Prisoners by the Kings Soldiers, and in great need, she consulted how she might send relief to them : and when it was answered, that such an act would raise jealousies (in some) of her loyalty to His Majesty, she replied, No man wil suspect my loyalty, because I relieve these Prisoners, but he would suspect my Christianity, if he should see me relieve a needy Turk, or Jew : however, I had rather be so misunderstood, (if this my secret Almes should be known) then that any of mine enemies (the worst of them) should perish for want of it.

And this one instance, and reason of hers is ground enough to believe, she failed

led not to relieve her enemies, as often as occasion required.

But beyond all, her *mercifulness* towards the sick, was most laudable: her provision of *Antidotes* against infection, and of *Cordials*, and other several sorts of *Physick* for such of her neighbors as should need them, amounted yearly to very considerable sums: And though in distributing such medicinal provisions, her hand was very open, yet it was close enough in applying them, her *skil* (indeed) was more then ordinary, and her *wariness* too.

When any of the poor neighbors were sick, she had a constant care, that they should neither want such *releif*, nor such *attendance*, as their weak condition called for, and (if need were) she hired *Nurses* to serve them: And her own frequent *visiting* of the poorest *Cottagers*, and her ready *service* to them, on their sick-bed, argued as great *humility*, as *mercifulness* in her; yet the Books of *spiritual exhortations*, she carried in her hand to these sick persons, declared a further design she had therein, of promoting them towards *heaven*, by reading to them, and by administering words of *holy counsel* to them: There

is

is no season more fit (*she would say*) for sowing good seed, then this ; while the ground of their hearts is softened, and melting with sorrow, and sickness ; And to gain this advantage it was, that *she* was so frequent a Visitor of the sick, going day after day, to their bed-side : This Honourable Lady hath bin observed sitting in a Cottage, wayting the sick womans leisure, til the slumbers and fits were over, that *she* might read again to her, and finish the work *she* had begun.

And of late when *she* could not do this good office, in her own person (*she growing sickly and weak*) yet *she* would do it stil by proxie : for some of her friends or servants were deputed by her, to go to the sick, with her Books too, daily ; and now and then most of her family (who were fit for such an imployment) were sent abroad on this errand.

Thus ordinarily in all her works of corporal mercy, *she* added works of spiritual mercy, too ; relieving the wants of the body, and of the soul together, instructing, and exhorting, and earnestly perswading the poor and the sick to some virtue or other, for their souls health.

Herein following the command in this  
Sermon,

*Sermon, and also the example of the Preacher, our most blessed Savior: who, when he cured the diseases of the body, cured the diseases of that infirm soul too; and at the same time, with one word, administred to the sick and impotent, both health and grace; our Saviors practice is the glosse upon his own Text; And this handmayd of his, was for the text, and this glosse too of mercifulnesse.*

*And as for this, so for meeknesse also, she was most eminent: she was second to none of her Sex, & Age (I believe) among us, for perspicacity of understanding, & clearnes of judgement; yet as far from self-conceit, as from ignorance: her wont indeed was upon debates, to object til all arguments, she could think on, to the contrary, were satisfied; and when that was once done, no cavill was heard, but her assent readily given; and this ready submission of her judgement, to the best reasons, I mention, for the meeknesse of her understanding: herein this Lady excelled some of the chiefest Rabbies, that her knowledge did not puff up, but edifie.*

*And her understanding leading the way in meeknesse, her wil chearfully followed in it too; as soon as her understanding was satisf.*



satisfied, *her will* bowed presently and obeyed; *she* seldome denied to do, what *she* was convinced was fit to be done.

The greater difficulty was with *her* affections: *her* natural temper *she* would oft complain inclined *her* to anger; and being so well aware of it *she* most diligently observed *her* self, and did in a great degree conquer that forward inclinations and that good measure of meekness (in this kind) which *she* attained unto, was the more commendable, because of the many great difficulties *she* met with, in it.

Then for peaceableness: as much as in *her* lay, and as far as was possible, *she* had peace with all men; *she* suffered *her* self to be defrauded, and damaged in *her* Estate, rather than *she* would disquiet a debtor, by suits at law; for peace is equivalent (said *she*) to the summe detained.

And for differences in Law among others, where *she* was not a Party, *her* Christianity engaged *her* to wish, and endeavour for reconciliation amongst Brethren; but especially, when controversies arose between Neighbors, and Parishioners, *she* made use of all *her* power and art, to reconcile them.

And *she* had *her* Antidotes here too, as well

well as her medicines ; to prevent contentions, as well as to cure them. It cost her a good sum, your Ladyship knows, a while since to prevent a contention, she foresaw a rising among the neighbors, about the choice of a Parish Officer : she hired one, and all was peaceable and quiet.

Thus she hungred and thirsted after peace, and after righteousness too ; as she chased, wearied, and faint heart after the water brooks, so her soul seemed to long after righteousness ; frequently panting, Oh why am I not ? oh how shal I be ? oh when shal I be perfect, as my heavenly Father is perfect ?

And for patient suffering. Of late she was seldome free from this, or that trouble : spiritual afflictions, and sorrows, or bodily infirmities, of weakness and sickness, or worldly losses, in her estate, one, or more of these, or such like pressures were constantly heavy upon her ; yet little disturbance, no impatience at all could be perceived in her ; I have seen them all upon her together, and yet her patience triumphing over them all.

There were who thought her in love with suffering, when she refused to pay contribution money against the King, and suffered

suffered her stock of great value to be seized on, rather then to pay some little tax, which was demanded: This (I say) was thought much; had not carrying the Cross, when it is inevitably layd on, bin enough: but thus to meet the Cross, and take it up, thus forwardly to suffer damage, rather then blemish her obedience and loyalty, this was her practice; and therefore til the King himself granted an indulgence, she patiently suffered whatsoever damage came upon her, stil refusing to pay contribution to the neighboring Garrisons, which were against him.

And now after the exercise of all these virtues in this high degree, such a Poverty of spirit was apparent in her, as was most admirable: upon all occasions bewailing her weaknesses, and lamenting her spiritual wants: There were some about her, who had an holy emulation to be like her, in these, and such like graces and virtues, and she hath now and then overheard them, wishing, that they were as forward, as she: and her constant reply was, Oh ye are not so backward! yet wish your selves better; ye know not how vile and corrupt my haert is: So that in some respects she accounted her self, the greatest of sinners;

in

in no respect would *she* esteem better of *her self*, than of the least of *Saints*; a wel-wisher towards *holines*, and a beginner stil.

Thus *she* daily practised these *graces* and *virtues*, to which our *Savior* annexeth such special *blessings*; and studied to be stil more and more perfect in them, with as much diligence, as the *Scholar* doth his *lesson*, and with as much *success*, and good *speed* too.

And from this *Sermon* of our *blessed Savior*, *she* learned that duty of *Praier*; and *her* cheif practise therein, *she* could not conceal from us neither, which was, as follows.

First, *she* spent some *howrs* every day in *her* private *devotions*, and *meditations*; and these were called, (I remember) by those of *her* family, *her* busy *howrs*; *praiers*, *her* *business*; *Martha's* employment, was *her* recreation, *she* had spare *howrs* for it; *Maries*, was *her* *business*.

Then *her* *Maids* came into *her* *Chamber* early every morning, and ordinarily *she* passed about an *howr* with them; In *praying*, and *catechising*, and *instructing* them; To these *secret* and *private* *praiers*, the *publik* *Morning* and *Evening* *praiers* of the *Church*, before *dinner*, and *supper*;

supper; and another form, (together with reading *Scriptures*, and singing *Psalms*) before bed-time, were daily and constantly added.

And so strict was she for the observing of these severall *houres* of Prayer, that a charge was given her servants to be frequent, (if their occasions permitted) at every of them: However, she would not endure that any one should be absent from them all; If she observed any such, she presently sent for them, into her Chamber; and consecrated another hour of Prayer, there, purposely for them: And she would pray with those servants privately, ere she went to Bed, who had not prayed publikly with her, that Day.

To pray with *David*, seven times a day, or with *Daniel* three times, is expected perhaps only from such persons, as have leisure and opportunity: but with *Levi* to offer up *Morning* and *Evening* sacrifice every day, this she required from the busiest servant in the house, that at the *out-goings* of the *Morning* and *Evening*, every one should praise God, and call upon his name.

Neither were these holy offices appropriate

priate to her menial servants, others came freely to joyn with them, and her Oratory was as open to the neighbors, as her Hall was.

On the *Lords day* she rose in the Morning, earlier then ordinarily; yet enjoyed her self so much private duty, with her children and servants, (examining them in the Sermons, and Catechisings, &c.) and with her own soul, that oftentimes the day was too short for her; and then I have known her rise two or three hours before day, on the *Monday*, to supply what was left undone, the day before.

To dispose her self the better for the religious keeping of the *Lords day*, (as well as for other spiritual ends) I presume it was, that she so solemnly fasted every *Saturday*; that day she sequestred her self from company, and from worldly employment, and came seldom out of her Closet, til towards evening, and then the Chaplain must double the sacrifice; prayers she had and Catechising both.

And the other *Holy days* of the Church, she punctually observed: and when the publick duties were performed by the Congregation, on those days, she released her servants to their recreations, and to their

their particular *Occasions* ; saying, *These days are yours, and as due to you, as ordinary days to my employments* ; and I wil not be unjust to encroach upon *your severals*, by expecting any work from you.

And on these *Holy days* she rejoyced much, at the advantage she gained, of going to her poor *unlearned neighbors* with her *Book* ; now their *plow* and their *wheel* (said she) *stands stil* : and they are at good leisure, to hear some good *lessons* read to them.

And her strictness was exemplary in keeping the *Fasts* of the Church, and such days as were appointed for *solemn humiliation* : *yong and old, noble, and mean, free and bond*, in her family, must observe them duly ; the *Ninivites* were her *patern*, both for *outward* and *inward humiliation*.

And since our calamities increased upon us, she often wished, that *lawful authority* could vote it fit, that not only the *second Fridays*, but also the *last Wednesdays* in every Month, should be kept solemnly throughout the land ; that our *Fasts* were doubled, as wel as our troubles.

And her care to prepare her self for the receiving of the *holy Sacrament*, of our most blessed *Lords Supper*, was most commendable,

mendable, and most punctual : oftentimes  
*scruples* and *fears* arose in *her*, tending to  
 keep *her* back from that *heavenly banquet*;  
 and *she* (having, upon examination of  
 them, reason enough, (as we thought) to  
 conclude, that they were *temptations* from  
 the *Devil*, whom *she* perceived labouring  
 amain, to deprive *her* of that *strength* and  
*comfort*, which *she* hoped to receive from  
 that *sacred ordinance* ) neglected them all  
 and presented *her* self, with an *humble* and  
*trembling heart*, at that *blest Sacrament*;  
 and these *fears* and *scruples* in *her*, occa-  
 sioned this *peremptory resolution* from *her*,  
 that *she* would not (*by Gods help*) thence-  
 forth omit any opportunity of *communica-*  
*ting* : Thus while the *Devil* is *undermining*  
 to *weaken her*, *she* is *countermining* to  
*strengthen her self* more against him;  
 which *resolution* *she* constantly kept at  
*home*, and (I am told) at *Oxford*, and  
*London* too; The first inquiry almost after  
*her* journey thither, was, where, and when  
 is there a *Communion*? and sometimes *she*  
 would go to the other end of the *City*  
 for it.

At home *her* *Servants* were all moved  
 to accompany *her* to the *Sacrament*, and  
 they who were prevailed with, gave up  
 their



their names to *her*, too or three days before; and from thence, *she* applied *her* self to the instructing of *them*; and *she* knew wel, how to administer, to every one their particular portion; and *several* exhortations *she* had for *several* persons whom *she* had power over.

Yet *she* trusted not in *her* own instructions of them, but desired the *Chaplains* help also to *examine* them, and to *instruct* them farther; and *her* care was so to order *her* domestical occasions, that all those *Servants*, who were to receive the *Sacrament*, shou'd have the day before it free from their *ordinary* work, that they might have better leisure for that *spiritual* work of preparing themselves for that *Sacrament*.

And after the *holy* *Sacrament*, *she* called *them* together againe, and gave them such exhortations as were proper for *them*.

And this very care and piety in family-duties, was so highly esteemed of an *Abraham*, that *God* made him one of his privie councell (as I may so say) for that alone, *Gen.* 18. 17. And might not the singular *wisdom* and deep knowledg of divine counsels, and heavenly mysteries, which

this daughter of Abraham had, be a reward of that care to instruct her Children, and household in the ways of God?

Yet while she is thus religiously and piously imployed in this good proficiency, and far progress, going on from grace to grace, from virtue to virtue; God hath a further designe upon her, another affliction to quicken her yet more.

Her young and most dear son Lorenzo (whom God had endowed with the choicest of natural abilities, and to whom her affections were most tender, by reason of those fair blossoms of piety, she perceived in him) God takes away from her.

This added to her former troubles, of the loss of her Husband, of her crosses in the world, and of her spiritual afflictions (which came often upon her) makes the burthen most heavy; she was bruised with afflictions before, but now she fears being ground to powder.

Now she weeps and mourns all the day long, and at night also waters her couch with teares; and weeping, saith, ah! this immoderate sorrow must be repented of, these tears wept over again: and this quick sense of displeasing God, by this deep grief soon allayed the vehemency of it. And now she

she retires her self to listen, what the Lord God said unto her, in this louder call of affliction; and she seems to be prompted, that she was not yet weaned enough from the things of this world, and that it is expedient for her, that some of those worldly comforts she most delighted in, should be taken away from her, that her conversation may be yet more spiritual, and heavenly, and therefore this affliction seemed to call her to a greater mortification to the world, and to a nearer conformation to Christ her Lord.

Yet still her sorrow for her son is somewhat exorbitant, (she fears) and therefore she goes to her ghostly Physician again, and acquaints him with the violence of those fits of sorrow, which of late had seized upon her, for the death of her Son; and he with his medicinal counsel and direction, by Gods help, cured this her distemper; and antidotes he prescribed too, to prevent a relaps into this malady of excessive grief.

Now she confesses that this very affliction was most fit for her, and that it would prove most behoofful to her, and therefore she labors to put on joy instead of sorrow, and comfort in stead of mourning,

ning, and returning home with perfect cheerfulness, every one there observed a most notable, though sodaine change in her; sad *Hanna's* countenance and conversation not more visibly changed upon the good words of *Eli* the Prophet, to her, concerning the *Samuel* she should obtain, then hers now is, after the loss of our.

Thus God made the medicine most sovereign to her, and the antidote too; for I verily believe she never after, felt any fit of that her disease; and though she wept often for her tears so profusely spent formerly upon her Sons hearse, yet after this, not a tear more shed over it.

And with this extraordinary cheerfulness she takes up a most firm resolution of a further progress in holiness and piety, and addresses her self to run these later stages of her Christian race, with greater speed, then she had shewed in any of the former: and thereupon she begins with a most diligent endeavour to conform her life exactly, and universally to the most holy wil of God.

But the Devil, who before envied her beginning, and her proficiency much more, is now most violent to hinder her perfection; and therefore upon this her rennewed purpose

purpose of more exact obedience, presently assaults her with fiercenesse and rage, strongly tempting her, to think that she had deceived her self all this while, and that she had mocked God with a counterfeite repentance, which was no way acceptable to him.

And an Argument was brought to this purpose, which was so fully sutable to the tendernesse of her own spirit, that it is hard to say, whence it proceeded.

And this it was; my grief for my sins hath not been so vehement, as that, the other day, for the death of my Son; I wept not so bitterly for them, as I did for that; and therefore, that my repentance is not acceptable; you may read the argument further pressed against her self, in the Letters annexed.

And in this anguish of spirit, she hastens to her learned friend againe, and begs counsell and direction from him, and after devout Prayers and holy Conferences, received full comfort and thorow satisfaction, and returns home now as visibly lifted up from the deep pit of anguish, and disquiet of spirit, as she was the other day, from the valley of sorrow: and with tranquillity of mind, and joy of heart, shews to her friends,

both how she sunk, and how she was raised again; as you may read further in the annexed Letters.

And now having *by the help of her God leapt over this wall*, and overcome this difficulty, with much *cheerfulness of spirit*, she enters upon the practice of what she had last resolved on. This opposition though it staid her awhile, yet *set an edge upon her resolution*, and she soon recovered that *whetting time*. And she begins by a most sharp mortification, to obey the call of her last Affliction.

The vanity of *apparel and dresses* she had *cut off long before*; and after her *Husbands death*, the *richnes* of them too. These (and her *looking-glasses with the women in the law*, *Exod. 38.8.*) she had laid by, for the *service of the Tabernacle*; what she spared in these, she bestowed upon the poor *Members of Christ*, and now she begins to *cut off all worldly pomp* also.

In her *House*, in her *Retinue*, and at her *Table*, and otherwise, she denies her self that *state* (which her *quality* might have excused) that (with *Dorcas the Widow*) she might be full of good works; and more delight she takes to see her *Revenues* now spent among a crowd of *Almes-men* and  
*women*

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women at her dore, then by a throng of Servants in her house ; it was a greater joy to her, that she could maintain poor children at their Books, and their work, then to have Pages and Gentle-women for her Attendants : These expences she knew would be better allowed, in her Bill of Accounts, at the general Audit, then those other; it was her pomp and joy to mortifie all useles pomp of State, and all delight in Courtly vanities.

And now her anger too (which was crushed before) must be wholly subdued ; and to that purpose she solicitously avoids all enquiries ; and all discourse which she feared would provoke her to immoderate anger ; and when she feels it strugling to arise in her, then presently (either by silence, or by diverting to another matter) she labors to stifle it.

And while she is suppressing the sinfulness of this passion, she undertakes also, that most difficult task of taming the tongue : And as it is necessary with unruly beasts, she begins roughly with it, ties it up, with a most strong resolution, and scarce suffers it to speak, lest she should offend with her tongue: thus for some while it was streightned, and then she loosed it a little with these two cautions.

## 178 *The holy Life and Death*

First, that it should *never speak evil of any man, though truly, but only upon a designe of charity, to reclaim him from that evil*: And because it is not ordinary to reclaim any vicious person, in his absence, therefore her charge is peremptory to her tongue, That it never should *speak evil of any man*, were he most notoriously vicious, if he were *absent* and *not like to be amended by it*: A strict rule this, yet verily I perswade my self, that for a long time before her death, *she* most punctually observed it; *she* accounted it a crime to *speak evil falsely* of any man; and it went for a slander with her (as wel it might) to *speak evil truly* of any one, unless it were in love.

The second caution *her tongue* had, was that, *as much as was possible, it should keep in every idle word, and speak out only that which was to edification*.

The *Thessalonians* were famous for speaking to the edification one of another, *1 Thes. 5. 11.* and this *Thessalonian language* our good Lady studied, with as much diligence and earnestness, as we ordinarily study a deep science, or a gainful mystery: and now *she* is very slow to speak (as the Apostle exhorts) and, where *she* cannot  
rule



rule the discourse to edification, she sits silent, and refrains even from good words, though it be pain and grief to her.

And of late she distinguisht between civil, and spiritual edification, and scarcely allowed her self discourses for civil edification of her friends, or neighbors in worldly matters: Spiritual edification in heavenly things was all her aim.

And her care was the same in writing, as in speaking; not a vain, not an idle word must slip from her pen; she thought not her soul clean, if there were such a blot in her paper. In her Letters, no favour of complement at all, and she judged her self guilty of a trespass, if she subscribed her self, Your servant, to whom she was not really so.

And for that other temperance in diet, as well as in speech, she was very eminent. A smal dosis, of meat or drink, and of sleep, and ease, sufficed her.

In fastings often, in watching often; and temperate she was, in an high degree continually. And these were sure means for the mortification of her appetites: and as far from daintiness as from intemperance, and both that, and this, not only in a care of her health, and in respect of Gods commandment,

mandement, but also out of a *Consciousness* (as *she* would now and then intimate) that *she* was unworthy to enjoy any thing, for *quantity* or *quality* above the *meanest* in the *Parish*.

And together with these *mortifications* of her *affections* to *honor* and *state*; and of her *appetites*; *She* now also severely undertakes the *mortification* of her *natural Affection* to her *Children* and *Friends*, and keeps that from its wonted exorbitancy: It sounded very harshly, to some of her dearest friends, when *she* said, *Oh love me not I pray too much!* untill *she* added, and *God* grant, *I never love my friends too much* hereafter, that hath cost me dear, and my heart hath smarted sore with grief for it already: And now her will and understanding must be henceforth more mortified then formerly; *she* hath resigned them before to *Gods Will*, and *she* renues that resignation daily, and most freely submits her self in every thing, not only to *Gods Will*, but also to his *Wisdom*: And whatsoever comes upon me (said *she*) *I* will bear it patiently, because by *Gods will* it comes; yea, *I* will bear it cheerfully, because by *Gods wisdom* it is thus ordered, and it will work (as all things else) for mine advantage.

And

And upon this reason she was wont to account the death of her Husband, and of her Son as extraordinary perquisites and advantages to her ; and therefore I should offend not only against free obedience and submission, but also against common prudence (said she) if I should wish my condition otherwise, then now it is ; I cannot wish any thing so gainfull and prosperous to me, as this, which my heavenly Father in his wisdom hath ordered for me.

And as in suffering, so in doing, she resigns up her self wholly, and resolves (by the grace of God) to do whatsoever is her duty in every thing, and therefore she proposes henceforth to deliberate of nothing, but what is her duty, in this, or that particular ; and without further pause goes about it.

When matters of difficulty came, she usually consulted with the most learned and pious Divines she could meet with, to learn what was her duty therein ; she trusted not her own judgement, nor mistrusted theirs ; but presently applied her self to do, as they directed her.

In the Transactions of worldly affaires, though she foresaw sometimes inconveniences ensuing by following their directi-

ons, yet more *she* feared might otherwise happen, and therefore *she* would not neglect them. And when the success of any business answered not to her expectation, *she* seemed not troubled at it; her Conscience bearing her witness, that *she* had done what was her duty to doe; and seeing it was God, who in his wisdom denied her success, *she* would still hope, and say, Though at this time, this way, this business prospered no, yet at some other time, some other way, it will be successfull unto me. This doing my duty will be some time, or other, some way or other, for mine advantage.

And these her mortifications were not without a great degree of Sanctification, both in the inward and outward man; for to these *she* joyned her former purpose of adorning her soul, more speciously with those virtues which our Savior commends, in his Sermon on the Mount; and now *she* endeavours to put them in practice, more perfectly, and more exactly then formerly *she* had done.

And first, mercifulness begins to exceed: *she* was most liberal before, now *she* is (considering her Estate, brought into a very narrow compass) most bountiful: for whereas before the main of her Revenue was

was for her own maintenance, the superfluity of it for her charity, now the maine of her Revenues goes abroad for Charity; the other only is left at home for her maintenance: I have heard her compute, and the remainder after such and such deeds of Charity to be expended quarterly, that small pittance was only it, she accounted hers, and ordered her course of life accordingly; very well content, though she her self made a shift with Angurs single food, and rayment, Prov. 30. 8. that others, who depended on her, should (as the household of Lermuels virtuous Woman) be fed, and cloathed with double, c. 31. 21.

And with this, her meeknes exceeds also: meeknes was the attire of her soul, before, now it is the Ornament thereof: hath the fulness, and length, and comelines too, of an Ornament or Robe: And I will say nothing (for I cannot say enough) of the richness, and glory, and beauty of that Robe, a meeke and quiet Spirit: now she growes a most eminent pattern of meeknesse and gentlenesse in every kind, and all that knew her admired and revered her for it.

And her Compassion, which was thought to be with the deepest before, goes deeper

per now ; she had formerly the *bowels* of a most tender *Mother*, towards every one in distresse, now she put on the *bowels* of *God* ; and so enlarged she grows in her *bowels*, that she seldome sees, or hears of any object of pity, but they *yearn* so much within her, as to force tears from her *eyes* ; And it is hard to say, whether her *Bowels*, or her *Hand*, (her *Compassion*, or her *Charity*) contributed most to the comfort of the poor and needy.

*This* was confined, that at large ; and the publique Calamities which her *Hand* of *Charity* could not reach, her *Bowels* of *Compassion* did ; And we, who observed her (when the publique and generall miseries of the Kingdome and Church were the Discourse at Meales) to mingle her *Drink* with her *Teares*, cannot but think, that the sadder thoughts of them, in private, made her water her *Couch* with her *Teares*.

And now she is almost pined with *hunger*, and faint with *thirst* after righteousness ; ever and anon sighing, *Oh that I could attain unto it ! Oh that my ways were made so direct !* It was usuall with her at night, to compose her self to sleep, saying to her *woman* (not without some joy) *well, now*

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*I am one day neerer my journies end; comforting her self, that when her body should sleep in the bed of her grave, then the days of sin should be accomplished, and then she should be perfect, as her heavenly Father is perfect.*

Particularly, her hunger and thirst after justice was most commendable, that judgment might run down as a stream, and righteousness like a mighty river: And for justice in her own affaires, there lives not (I believe) any one, more punctual and exact then she was. She perused a learned and strict Treatise of justice, and made those rules her standard, practising them most precisely: And in more perplexed and difficult cases she would send to some Divines (of whose piety and fervor she had a good opinion) and desire them to pray (as she her self did) that she might be most just in them, neither swerving to the left, nor to the right hand.

In her absence from home, the Sutlers of the Army came to her House, and took provision, paying for every particular the highest price; which, when her Servant accounted to her again, she computed exactly, what the particulars cost her; and then sent solicitously up and down the  
Army

*Army to find out the Suttlers, and to restore the overplus, which she thought not just to be taken by her : and her hunger and thirst after that justice was not satisfied, til she heard it was so done.*

*And for engagements descended to her ( after care taken to satisfy them with all possible speed ) she lamented often with tears that she could not actually discharge them, saying, though they may consist with justice, 2 King. 4. 1. yet they could not consist with that outward thankfulness, which she desired to express.*

*And for the other points of our Saviors Sermon, her charity suspected few, judged none of her neighbors; an Eagles ey she had, to espie any good, though but inclinations in them, and with a favorable construction, judged the best of what she heard, or saw in them : yet a Moles ey, to espy the evil, though acts in her brethren ; a more of goodness could not escape her sight ; but it must be a beam of evil, her ey would take notice of : and her slowness to believe miscarriages in any one, draw all tale-bearers from her : yet when faults were evident ( in such as she had charge over ) she would reprove with a great deal of power.*

*She*



*She was most respectful to her superiors; and most courteous and affable towards inferiors; And very cautious lest she should give offence to one, or other, either in word or gesture; and as cautious too, lest any of them should take offence at any speech, or look of hers, towards them; for either way (said she) in offences given, or taken, God is offended; And her humility in begging forgiveness from others, was most singular: of late, your Ladyship knows, she seldom slept, till she had asked forgiveness as well as blessing from you; if she had offended you, she thought your pardon necessary; if not, it was no cumbrance, to have supernumerary pardons from you, lying by her.*

*But to see this honourable Lady begging forgiveness from her inferiors, and servants (as she often did) for her angry words to them, or her chiding frowns upon them, was that, which put us all to shame, and to astonishment: now and then, when she had expressed no anger, outwardly, yet their pardon she would desire, because, said she, somewhat I felt within myself, too like anger against you, though I suppressed it, as soon as I could.*

*More than once, or twice of late, she brought*

brought her gift to the *Altar* (was in her *Closet* upon her knees towards *Prayer*) and there she remembred, that her Brother might possibly have somewhat against her, (for such a word, or such a look, or a neglective silence a little before) and she left her gift at the *Altar*, and went, and was reconciled, (asked pardon) and then came and offered: so that her chief care was still, to lift up in *Prayer* pure hands; without wrath; If there were any wrath in her against others, or any, in others against her, she would have it allayed, before she offered her gift of *Prayer*.

And though all these *graces* and *virtues* (by *Gods* help) did thus increase in her, yet a true *poverty* of *spirit* encreased also in her. The more *Holy*, the more *Pious* she was, the more *humbly* she walked with *God*: In her greatest abundance she complained most of *spiritual* wants. Sure the bright *lustre* of her *virtue* gave her an advantage, to espie many corruptions in her self, which she could not before; and these she lamented more sadly, now, then heretofore.

And in these *duties* of *prayer*, she advanced forward too. Now, her *Nursery* must have an *Oratory* annexed to it; and her  
*Children*

Children their private Devotions ; they are appointed by her, to read *Morning and Evening Prayers*, and *Lessons* at their rising up, and at their lying down : and their spare minutes being destined as hers also were to *conning of Psalmes without book* ; they open the day with one of the seven *Encharistical Psalmes* (for thanksgiving to God, for renewing his loving kindnes to them that *Morning*) and they shut up the day, with one of the 7 *Penitential Psalmes* (praying for pardon of the offences of the day) this care she took to season her Childrens affections, and *memories* with good things ; and now she trains them up also, to those *virtues* commended in our *Saviors Sermon*, and an explication of them, she directs, should be annexed to their first *Catechism*.

And for the *Church prayers* in her house, there was of late some *exceptions* against continuing that practice ; and some danger the *Exceptors* apprehended, likely to have ensued upon it : Hereupon the *Book of Martyrs* was brought, and the story of the *Lady Knevit in Norfolke*, in the time of *Queen Mary* was publickly read, which in short is this,

" A persecuted Protestant Minister, be-  
" ing

"ing in her house, reads the Morning and  
 "the Evening prayer, of King *Edward* the  
 "fixt his Service-book (the same with our  
 "Service-book) constantly in her family,  
 "though there were an Act of Parliament  
 "against it. Hereupon the holy Lady is  
 "threatned to be punished for it; she  
 "goes on notwithstanding, in that course  
 "of piety, promising to welcome the pu-  
 "nishment, when ere it came: And though  
 "many resorted to her house, who had  
 "disaffection enough to her piety, and  
 "particularly to that Form of prayer, yet  
 "they commonly kneeled down, and joy-  
 "ned in prayers with her; God would not  
 "suffer their hands to punish, nor their  
 "mouths to speak against her, for it.

And now, when every passage in this  
 story was so readily applicable, to this our  
 pious Lady also, she wanted not an answer  
 for the Objectors, nor courage to go on in  
 her wonted course: and the event was  
 most particularly according to the presi-  
 dent; for though complaints were made,  
 and threats sent to us; and many quar-  
 tered upon her, who liked not our Form of  
 Prayer, and had power to suppress it, yet  
 God suffered them not to execute that their  
 power upon us. And, Madame, if the Lady  
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*Knevit* was thought fit be Chronicled (amongst the Martyrs and Confessors) for this alone, I pray let not this of our Lady be forgotten : And I shall presume that your Ladyship, and every one who considers these, and such like examples, wil hazard any thing, rather then alter your course of piety, and constant use of our sacred *Liturgy*.

And *she* was as constant, and as resolute for her other hours of Prayers and Meditation. The entertainments of honourable persons, or the haste of necessary business, should not excuse her from these other Devotions; In her deepest griefs and disturbances, in her highest comforts, and gratulations, *she* was most constant at them : and though *she* could not, at these times, discharge those duties at her ordinary hours, yet her eyes were not suffered to sleep, til *she* had gone through with them ; when *she* must lose her sleep, or God this his service, *she* readily resolved, which was fittest of the two.

Her last work, every Evening, was to review with some diligence all the works of that day, her thoughts, words, and deeds ; what in this room, what in that ; what in this company, what in that ; what good  
*she*

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*she had done, what evil she had committed; what opportunities of benefiting others, she had embraced, or neglected; and what comforts and blessings she had that day received: and after this examination, giving thanks, and begging pardon, in every particular, as occasion required, having communed with her own heart, in her bed-chamber, she was still.*

Thus *she* was a very good proficient in these several points of our Saviors Sermon, went on from one degree to another, in most of them. Faith, and judgment (the weighty matters of the law, the chief virtues) *she* was most eminent in; and for tything of mint and cummin (the lesser virtues) *she* would not leave them undone.

*She* thought not all the laws of God performed, If any laws of the King were neglected; and therefore *she* was wont earnestly to presse obedience to all things, which the laws of the Realm require; even to penal laws against shooting and hunting, and the like; and would not suffer any of hers to transgresse, in these lesser matters: Severely (though judiciously, and truly enough) affirming, *That the Law-givers made their penal laws, for obedience, not for*  
*Mulct;*

*Mulct*; and their first and chief intention was, that their laws should be observed, not that the offender should be punished.

And having thus far improved her self (by the grace of God) in an holy and spirituall life, she now labors what she can, to improve others also; and now she is strong, to strengthen her brethren.

A Covenant she enters with her acquaintance, especially those with whom she frequently conversed, that they should take liberty to reprove whatsoever they saw amisse in her: and also to give her liberty to deal so with them; saying to them, there is no friendship without this; and if you suffer me to be undone for ever; or I you; how are we friends?

There was neer acquaintance between her, and some strict *Papists*, and as near between her, and some strieter *Non-conformists*; and she not onely warily avoyded the *Superstition* of the *One*, and the *Non-conformity* of the *Other*, but also earnestly laboured to reduce the *One* and the *Other* from their Erroneous wayes; And not without happy Successe. I could instance in some (and perhaps your Ladyship can instance in more) who now are firme to the *Tenents* and *Practices* of

our Church of England, whom she (principally) by her Arguments and Endeavours gained from Rome, and from Geneva.

3 But for improving her nearer Acquaintance it was her constant Labour.

That counsel which she gave to young Mothers, not to be fond of their Children, or Husbands, came most properly, and most pathetically from her. Oh, I have had my portion (said she) of these very comforts, with the first; no one woman more; but there is no lasting nor true pleasure in them: There is no real comfort from any espousals, but from those to Christ; this (I say) came most fitly from her, here she had tripped once, and again, and now she fore-warns others of the dangers, lest they should stumble at it.

The benefit she had received from her childhood, by pious and learned Divines, makes her solicitous to provide such for her neighbors; and til they were acquainted (as well as she) with the conversations of the people, she would, some way or other, hint unto them, what virtues it would be proper to commend in their Sermons, and discourses to the Parish: and for catechizing the young, and for visiting the



the sick, she her self took a special regard, as if the cure had depended more upon the Patroness, then upon her Clerk.

And the remembrance of those heavenly comforts, she frequently had, while she playd upon Davids harp, set her on to commend these Psalms, for daily & howrly devotions to all.

Yet some discord she found of late, even from that harp; observing such Psalms of David, wherein he (by his Prophetical spirit, or in zeal for divine justice, upon the publick enemies of God) pronounces curses, spitefully picked out, and maliciously applyed, both in private families, and publick Congregations to our own enemies; This she often lamented as a most notorious profanation of the holy Book of Psalms, and as an evident breach of charity: Oh, that sweetest harp sounds most harshly, unless it be touched with pure hands, without wrath; Therefore (said she) the people must be often warned (in these days of contention, and opposition) to sing Davids Psalms, with Davids spirit: And when cursing of enemies came in, to reflect (as David oft did) upon the lusts and corruption of our hearts; and then the 109 Psalm, (a common curse among the He-

brews) be upon these our vilest enemies, and most deadly foes, little enough.

Neither was her care of improving others, confined to the present age; designs and projects she had also for posterity; of setting up schools, and manufacture trades in the Parish; to shut out (by those engines) for ever, ignorance, idleness, and want.

But that magnificent, and most religious contrivement, that there might be places for the education of young Gentlewomen, & for retirement of Widows, (as Colleges and the Inns of Court and Chancery are for men) in several parts of the Kingdom, This, was much in her thoughts; hoping thereby that learning and religion might flourish more in her own Sex, then heretofore, having such opportunities to serve the Lord, without distraction: A project this adequate to the wisdom, and piety, of this Mother in Israel; and not beyond the power, and interest, she had with great ones, to have effected it.

But these evil times disabled her quite, and discouraged her somewhat, from attempting much; in these her designs, she returns therefore to improve her self with the

the greater vigor ; If her virtue cannot shine out over all the Kingdome, it shall shine and burn so much the more within her own soul ; and now she grows so strict to her self, and so severe in examining her own heart, that, with holy Job, she fears all her workes : She had alway a tender conscience ; but now that exceeds too, in quickness, and tenderness ; and this holy fear began at last to breed in her many doubtings and scruples (which occasioned the last of these adjoyning Letters) and in these doubtings and fears, she seldom trusted her own judgment, but advised with learned Divines ; and when she met with any one of learning and piety, she proposes her Cases, and seeks Resolves.

And upon these fears she would dispute against her self very sharply ; scarce omitting any objection material, nor accepting any answer, which was not fully satisfactory ; and when she was once clearly resolved, she cheerfully submitted, and ordered her future practice accordingly.

And it is very observable, how this holy fear, (as her other virtues) extended it self also, not only to greater matters, but

also to lesser, almost to all : such was her love to God, and her reverential awe of his Majesty, that she feared to offend him, in the least particular : If it be but a mote, may it not grow (said she) to a beam in mine eye ?

And such zealous *Anxieties*, as these, such holy fears of displeasing God in any, the least thing, are strong arguments of most ardent love to God ; and of most passionate desires to please him ; oh how greedily did she aspire after perfection, while she thus sollicitously fears the least imperfection !

And if some of these *Scruples* proceeded from Her own *Carnal Reason*, or from *Satan* (to disquiet, and Disturb Her) yet even that *Poyson*, she turned into *Hony*, taking Occasion from those very *Scruples*, to be more exact afterward in her *Life*.

And now in the very last stage of her *Christian race*, she growes so exact, that all time seems tedious to her, which tends not to *Heaven* ; and thereupon she now resolves, to get loose from the multitude of her worldly employments ; and provides to remove from her stately mansion, to a little house neer adjoining ; and in that house  
and

and garden, with a book, and a wheel, and a maid or two, to retire her self from worldly businesse, and unnecessary visits, and so spend her whole time: and she took as great delight in projecting this humiliation and privacy, as others do, in being advanced to publick honours, and state employments.

Now toward the end of her race, all her strength seems weakness, and her quickest speed seems slothfulness; Therefore at Christmas last, she prepared to be at the holy Communion, with the first; and after that, her soul still wanting the strength and vigor it aimed at, she thinks of coming with the last too, the next Lords day: But he, who hath let, will let; for that very morning she had a very sore conflict, and great anguish in spirit: one while her warmthiness, another while her dulness, and drowsiness deterred her from approaching to the holy Sacrament; and then the singularity and unaccustomedness of receiving so often, dissuaded her; after an hour or two, some reason she found to presume this might be from the Devil, her grand enemy; (who was unwilling that the Castle which he now besieged, should be double-walled against him) and thereupon she continues

her resolution, and came to the *blessed Sacrament*, that second day also, and received with it much *comfort and peace*. And not many dayes after, the Devill brought his strongest batteries, & labour'd to take this castle by storm; *Temptations* again she had, and those *vehement and fierce*, to suspect her whole course of life, as so full of *weakness* at best, and oftentimes so full of *gross corruptions*; Her faith so weak, her repentance so faint, that God would not accept of her: But her shield of Faith in Christs merits, soon repelled these darts, and her wonted Sanctuary of prayer secured her presently from this storm of temptation.

And in peace and tranquillity of mind, her piety, and zeal of justice, hurry her to London (in the bitterest season of this winter) to take order for the discharge of some engagements: this she knew was her duty, and that she her self should take that journey, was conceived the necessary means to performe that duty, and therefore she ventures upon it, and leaves the success to God.

There, at London, she strengthens her self yet more, for the final period of her race, by receiving the holy Sacrament again:

gain : But alas, Madam, Though her inward strength encreases, her outward strength decays, and her weak consumptive body, by a cold there taken, grows weaker : yet thence she came homeward, and at Oxford, her cough and cold very much encreasing, she with most earnest Prayers, and holy meditations (which a pious and learned Divine suggested to her) prepares her self for death.

After a while, they, who were about her, fearing the pangs of death to be upon her, began to weep and lament; the whole company grew sad and heavy; she only continued in her former condition, not at all sorrowful, nor affrighted by these messengers of death: Then the Physitian comming, and upon consideration, saying, Here is no signe of death, nor of much danger; by Gods help she may recover again; the whole company was very much comforted, and cheared; she only in her former indifferency; no alteration at all could be perceived in her, as if she had been the only party in the chamber, unconcerned in it; neither fear of death could grieve, nor trouble her, nor hopes of life and health rejoyce her; I have wholly resigned up my self to God. (said she) and not mine, but his will be done; Whether

in life or death: She was not afraid to live, and still endure the miseries of this life (and ever and anon encounter with Satan too) because she had a powerfull God able to uphold her: nor yet afraid to die, and appear at Gods judgement seat, because she had a mercifull Redeemer, willing to save her.

They who write of perfection, account it an high degree, to have *Vitam in paucis* & *mortem in voto*, to be content to live, but desirous to die: yet surely, this here, *In equilibrio ad vitam, & ad mortem*, to be wholly indifferent, and to be most equally inclined to either, to desire nothing, to fear nothing, but wholly to resign our selves to God, accounting that to be the best (whatsoever it is) which He pleases to send, This, this is to be a strong man in Christ; And this in our most pious Lady was a very neer approach unto perfection.

It was related for a very great while in S. Cyprian, that, *Atque obsequi precepit Christi, quam vel se coronari*, He had rather live and obey God, then die and reign in glory: But this, to have no propensity at all more to one, then to the other, to be wholly indifferent, to work on still in Gods

Vine-



Vineyard, or to be called up to Heaven, to receive pay, this may be a greater virtue: And this perfect indifference to do, or suffer Gods will, in life, or death, appearing in this servant of God, was such an act of self-denial, which they, who observed it in her, could not but set a special character upon, most worthy to be commended to your Ladyship.

Thus she was brought from Oxford, home, and now being far spent, and near her end, she could speak little, yet expressed a great deal of thankfulness to God, who had brought her safe, to die in her own house, among her dearest Friends.

And there she shewed those friends a rare pattern of patience in the extremity of her sickness.

But the tranquillity of mind, which she had in these her last daies, was most observable; That the Devil, who had so often perplexed her, with violent temptations, should now leave her to rest and ease: she was wont to fear his most violent assaults on her death-bed, (as his practice commonly is) but now God (it seems) had chained him up, and enabled her (by his grace) to tread Satan under her feet: not a word.

word of complaint, nor the least disturbance, or disquiet, to be perceived by her, which is a sufficient argument to us, (who knew how open a breast she had, to reveal any thing in that kind, especially to Divines, whereof she had now store about her) of her exceeding great quietness, and peace: and this tranquility of mind, more clearly now appearing at her death, then ordinarily in the time of her health, is a great evidence, to me, of Gods most tender mercy and love towards her, and of some good assurance, in her, of her salvation.

This quiet gave her leave, though now very faint and weak, to be most vigorous, and most instant at prayers; she calls for other help, very faintly; but for prayers, most heartily and often (in those few hours she lived at home) and after the office of the Morning was performed, she gave strict charge, that every one of her family (who could be spared from her) should go to Church and pray for her; and then in a word of exhortation to them, who stayed by her, saying, fear God, fear God, she most sweetly spent her last breath; and so most comfortably yielded up her spirit to him who made it: and was (we doubt not) admitted

mitted into Heaven, into the *number* of the *Apostles* and *Saints* of God (on *S. Matthias day*) there to reign in the glory of God for evermore.

In which moment of *her death*, there seemed as little *outward pain*, as *inward conflict*; none could perceive either *cry*, or *groan*, or *gasps*, or *sigh*, onely *her spirits failed*; and so *she vanished* from us, as if God had intended *her here*, some *fore-tast*, not onely of the *rest* of the *soul*, but also of the *ease* of the *body*, which *she* should enjoy hereafter in *Heaven*.

Thus in *her youth*, *she* was soon perfected, and in a *short time* of five and thirty years, *she fulfilled a long time*.

And having in a most acceptable manner practised the *duties* of our most blessed *Saviours Sermon*, *she* is now (we firmly believe) partaker of the *blessedness* too of that *Sermon*; through *Christs mercy*, *she* hath obtained *mercy*, and enjoys the *vision* of God, in the *Kingdome* of *Heaven*, where *she* is most fully satisfied with *delight*, and *comfort*, and *joy*.

There were *these*, and many other *virtues* your *Ladiship* knows, observable in *this your most pious Daughter*; but I pretend

tend not to relate all, many I omit, because common to all the servants of God; and many other excellencies also there were in her, (I doubt not) which she concealed from her nearest friends; and indeed, many of these, I have named. she endeavoured studiously to conceal from us, but now, and then, unawares, she discovered them, and so I came acquainted with them.

And now, *Madam*, you have observed, that the growth of grace, which was most evident, and apparent in her, especially these late years (as of corn from a blade to an ear, then to a blossom, and thence towards full maturity and ripeness) was most of all promoted, by the afflictions, which God sent upon her; the loss of her dearest friends, and other troubles, were as a shower of rain, to a crop of corn, on a dry ground; an evident benefit, and a present improvement by it.

And was there not then somewhat extraordinary in that dream of hers, soon after her Sons death? wherein she being much troubled for that loss, a ladder presently appeared, reaching (with that Ladder in Jacobs dream) from earth to heaven; after the death of her Son, every one of us could sen-

sensibly perceive her climbing up higher, and higher every day, in piety, and holiness, till God exalted her, to the top of Jacobs ladder, the height of glory in heaven.

So may it be, with every one, who suffers inward, or outward affliction.

And now, though all this while, I have been comforting your Ladyship, and wiping the tears from your eyes, yet I have detained you too long (I fear) from improving this affliction sent upon you (the loss of your dearest child) with that hast and greediness you desired, to your spiritual benefit: I shall help you what I can hereafter, by begging in my prayers the strengthening, and establishing grace of God, for you, to bring store of heavenly comfort into your soul, from this your present sorrow.

And for the further satisfaction of those to whom you shall please to communicate this relation, I have prefixed a discourse (by way of Letters too) wherein much of a Character of this your Daughter is contained; It was composed for her, and delivered to her, and left among her Papers (and though upon the transcribing of the Letters I have altered and added somewhat, yet that was according to her desire and the directions I received from

her

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her self after her perusall of them;) and your Ladiship will quickly discern, that many of the objections, and of the answers too, came from her own self, and therefore proper enough, to be joyned with this relation of her Life. That herein I may promote the service of our gracious Lord, and comfort you, or any other of his true servants, is the utmost drift, and most earnest prayer, of him, who is,

Your servant in

April 15.

1647.

Christ Iesus.

I. D.

An



## *An Elegie,*

*Written to some Ladies of these  
Times.*

**Y**OU, who thought *Chaplains* only things  
of State,  
And count Them *(Coachmen Preaching)*  
out of date, (love  
Learn here their *holier use* ; and if you  
Your Souls as well as Bodies ; and would prove  
Your *plea* and *Evidence* to Heaven, and  
Make your *Election* sure, as Goods, or Land ;  
Having all Conscience-scruples set as cleare  
As your Law-doubts, or Blood-distempers are :  
Judge, if *Divines* be of Lesse Value, than  
Your costlie *Lawyer*, or *Physitian*.  
And think not that six Words or Lines of theirs  
More precious be, then *Sermons* are and *Praiers*.

Had You been e're so well as to be sick  
Of spiritual diseases, and were quick  
With the souls issue, *Virtue*, till you grew  
Big with devotion, and were *Born anew* :  
You then would hold the *Casuits* as Dear,  
As, in your other *Labors*, Midwives are.  
Then you'd prefer these *Cordial Letters*, 'bove  
All flattering-love-Epistles, which do prove,  
When read by th' sober and judicious eie,  
But handsome lies, and prettie blasphemie.

And

And are to these no more *Canonical*  
Then if with *Baltaz* you compare *Saint Paul*.

Would our *New Teachers* make this *Book* their  
Here they might learn to fit a *broken soul*, (*Schole*  
And scatter sacred calms into a brest,  
Thought 't were with all late niceties *possest*.  
While others lightning cast in stead of light,  
And carie both in looks, and sayings, night;  
Giving *solutions* difficult as the *Case*;  
(Like those that draw *Pictures* with half a face)  
Our *Oracle* here gives Answers full and clear,  
As Face to Face doth in the *Glass* appear.

Nor doth he *storm*, but meeklie checks a sin  
In that sweet stile, that stile the Gospel's in.  
Which makes his *Threatnings* amiable calm,  
And his *Lance* gentle as anothers *Balm*;  
Curing a wounded *spirit* without losse,  
While he refines the metal, burns the drosse.

Hence, to souls sunk in scare, his counsels prove  
Welcome, as *Nachs comforter*, the *Dove*.  
Welcome as *Peace* would be to all that are,  
Not slain, but worse, slav'd by a sev'n years war.

See how *daie* breaks! how *joie* and *sadness* greet!  
Thus have I seen *Sun beams* and *showers* meet,  
Leaving ith' *skie* the *gaudie Borne*, to let  
Vs know, we were not to be *drow'd* but *wet*.  
And if our *Faith* be strong, we *will* ex'n here  
See as true signs of *salvatie*, as is there.

O happie *Christians*! happie in each *Cross*!  
Do but compare these comforts with your loss,  
And you'll no more complain, then be that is  
*Ruin'd* to *Heaven*, *serv'd* into *Disse*.

But



But among all the *Cordials*, there is none  
Sufficient to redresse and still the moane  
Made at his *Ladies death*: 'tis that alone  
Scandals Divines, as *Agues* long have done  
The best Physicians; nothing can revive  
Our buri'd Souls, but bringing her alive.  
And that our *belov'd Chymist* doth essaye  
In his last Letter, where the *Mother maie*  
See her own *Daughter* risen from the Dead;  
So Risen, as ne're more to be Buried.

And now, though *Paul* forbids her Sex to preach,  
Yet may her Life instruct, and her Death teach,  
For good *Workers* ne're were alone'd. If we then  
Should see a Massacre of *Holie men*,  
With whom all Truths and *Dories* too should fall,  
Yet in Her practise we might find them all.  
Her *Drears* were more then boldest *Nuns* do now;  
The *Legends* will turn a true *Hist'ric* now;  
While all religious wonders they aver,  
Are not done only, but outdone by Her.  
Each morne the *Lovely Gospel* were her glass  
And *Featles Haman* his her *Amendments* was.  
Nor did she late or early draw in Air,  
But she return'd it back in *Praise*, or *Praier*.

'Tis true, Sh' had manie *scruples*; But they're such  
As neither *Gods*, nor *Kings* Prerogative touch.  
'Mongst all her holie *Doubtings*, you'd find none  
Startling at *Gods Decrees*, or *Three in One*.  
Such *Mysteries* her Faith had conquer'd; She  
Had only of Her self a *jealousie*.  
While She a *Judge* of others *Acts* was known,  
She's a severer *Tyrant* of her own.  
Suspicious of her best performance, still  
She fear'd she err'd; lest Good was with her Ill.

And

And though full fraught with *Maries* graces, yet  
She would her self *Magdalens* penance let;  
And wash those Tears with Tears; thus oftentimes  
More sorrowing for her *Praiers*, then we for crimes.  
Bless me ! how cross to hers hath our course bin !  
She mourn'd for *Innocence*, we joy in sin.  
Though these worst times *Uncharitable* be  
Even to *Charity* it self, yet she  
As Costly was in *Alms* and *Piety*,  
As *City Madams* are in *Luxury*.  
And made more *Visits* to the *Poor*, then those  
Do to the *Rich*, when they've new *Coach & Cloaths*.

Thus Good, thus Pious, she's the happy Spouse  
Of Him, who know best how to judge and chuse,  
Falkland the Learn'd, whose meanest parts were great  
Enough to make All other Lords Compleat.  
Nor did He wed her to joyne Fortunes, and  
Lay Bags to Bags, and couple Lands to Land;  
Such Exchange Ware he scorn'd, whose Nobler eye  
Saw in her *Virtues*, Rich Conviniency.  
Her Soul lay well for His, and made as fit  
A Match, as when *Discretion* meets with *Wit*.  
His Knowledge rectifi'd Her Zeal, and then  
Her Faith His Reason qualifi'd agen.  
Thus Two Elixirs mingled safely pass,  
Whereas each single often breaks the Glass.

R: W: ex O E: C: O x.

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THE END.

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## ERRATA.

**P**Age 20. l. 2. r. *afflictions*. p. 32. l. 14. r. *from you*.  
p. 39. l. 21. r. *offended friend*. p. 69. l. 1. r. *is that*  
*excuse*. p. 92. l. 6. r. *the regenerate*. p. 101. l. 14. *for*  
*were* r. *work*. p. 109. l. 20. *for no* r. *now*. p. 112. l. 20.  
*for temper* r. *tempter*. p. 113. l. 26. *for heires* r. *hires*.  
p. 125. l. 19. *for nor* r. *not*. p. 171. l. 24. r. *in Abraham*.  
p. 186. l. 26. *for draw* r. *drive*.

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